No. 809
Friday
18 Dec. '92

PRIVATE EYE

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

80p

Adoration of the Major AFTER BRUEGEL

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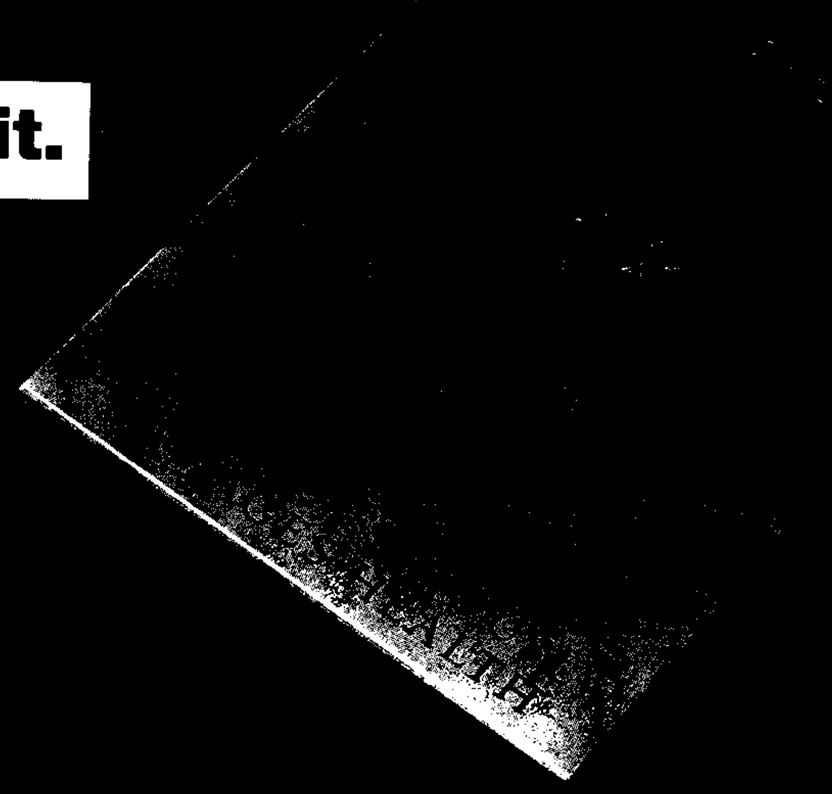
A nice dented bit.



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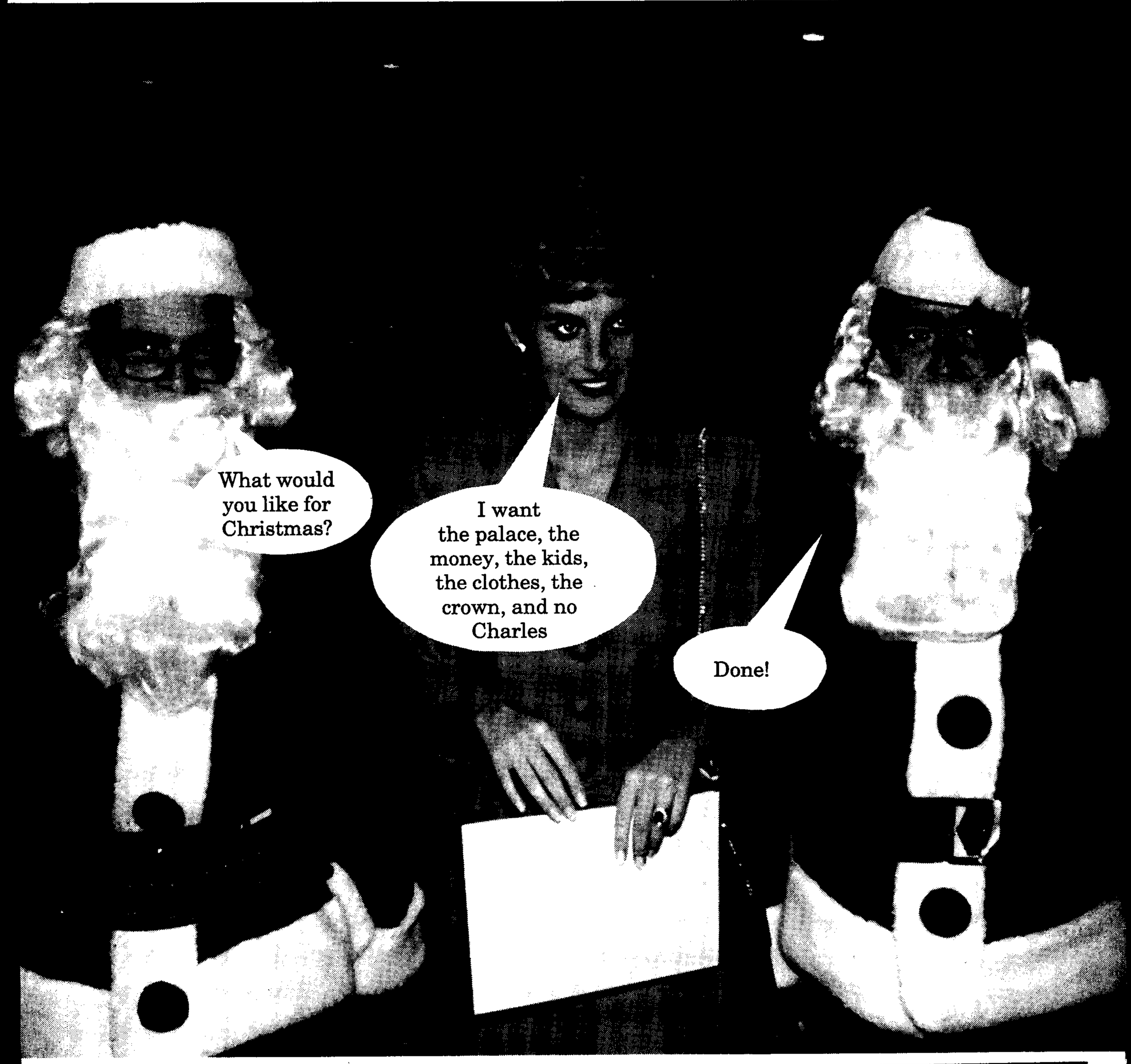

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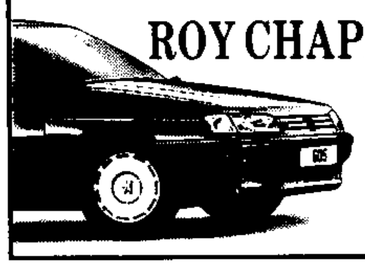

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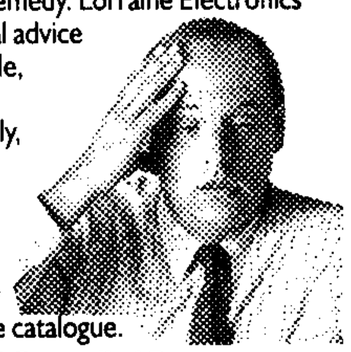

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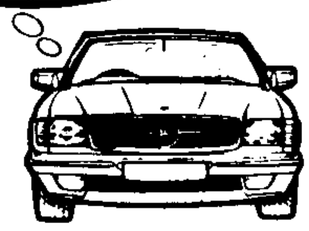
They screw me up properly in Beaconsfield



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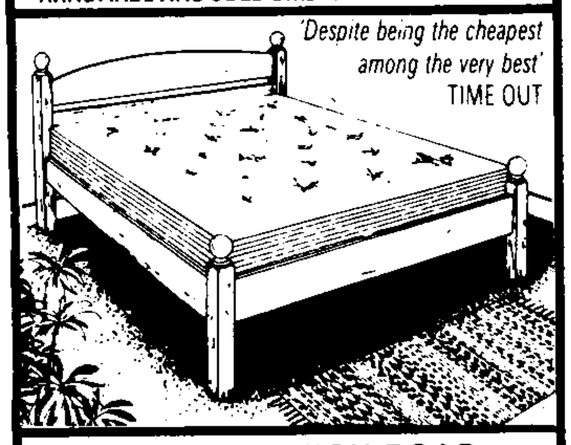

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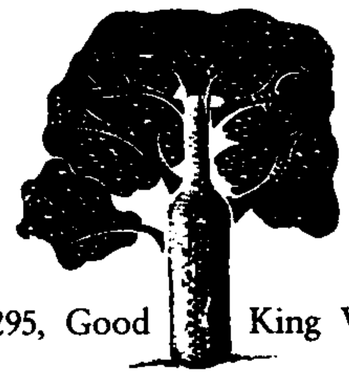

In 1295, Good King Vaclav II of Bohemia founded the town of Pilsen. He was an affable old ruler and granted numerous privileges to the town's inhabitants; one of these being the right to brew beer. According to ancient folklore, the readiness of the Pilsen beer was tested in a rather bizarre way. The inspectorate would pour the beer onto oak benches, and then, strangely enough, sit on it in leather breeches. Apparently, if the beer stuck to the leather it meant the beer was of the required density. Humble beginnings indeed in the art of beer making. But this was the start of a wonderful brewing history for Pilsen. For in 1842 the world's first golden lager was invented in this busy, bustling, Czechoslovakian market town. The pioneering Bohemian brewmasters proudly named their resplendent and refreshing beer Pilsner Urquell. Very quickly the beer became famous for its multifaceted character; maturity, crispness, with marvellous hints of honey and hoppiness. Its popularity grew and grew. Before long, many brewers throughout Europe and the New World produced their own brews in the 'Pilsen' style. Today, of course, lager brewing has grown into a mighty business. However, it must be said that for the more discerning beer drinker only the original from Pilsen is good enough. Clearly they are well aware of our roots. Pilsner Urquell

Gnome

STATEMENT FROM LORD GNOME
(to be read out in a solemn voice in all households up and down the country)

IT IS with great sadness that I must announce the separation of myself and Lady Gnome. I wish to stress that there are no third parties involved, certainly not my assistant and masseuse Miss Rita Chevrolet, nor my wife's fitness trainer Mr Max Chippendale.

Lady Gnome and I remain firm and affectionate friends. We will therefore continue to meet amicably on formal occasions, such as each other's funerals.

We have no plans to divorce, although our lawyers have agreed a 279-point agreement in the event of our so doing two years from today.

We will live separate lives in separate houses in separate countries, but this will in no way interfere with the bringing up of our children who, it need hardly be stressed, have at all times been our primary concern, particularly when we decided to separate.

We ask only that the media, who are entirely responsible for this tragedy, show a little restraint and refrain from any reporting about what I and my wife are up to now that we are still married.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Gnome House
Bucks

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"THE BOOK which gave me most pleasure was undoubtedly *Rear Columns: Collected Diaries of the Famous*, edited by Craig Brown (Corgi, £4.99). Brown strikes me as being head and shoulders the best of the young writers now practising the sacred art. He takes the form of parody and by adding his own element of surreal slap-stick turns it into something sublime."

— **Auberon Waugh in the *Sunday Telegraph*.**

Rear Columns, Colemanballs, Poetry Corner and *Major's Diary* — Perfect Christmas presents now on sale.

COLOUR SECTION

WHICH company will play the biggest part in the restoration of Windsor Castle? If asked such a question, John Redwood, arch-Thatcherite minister for the environment, would no doubt reply: "The one best qualified to do the job at the lowest cost."

There is only one company with the expertise and experience to renovate the castle, and it is BM South East, a subsidiary of the government-owned Property Services Agency which did a very similar job on Hampton Court when it burnt down a few years ago. The Queen is said to have congratulated the firm on its work there personally.

But under Mr Redwood's ruthless free enterprise regime, BM South East won't be able to tender for the Windsor Castle job. Can this be because the firm is publicly-owned and the government is prejudiced against public ownership? Not at all. There is no such discrimination in Whitehall.

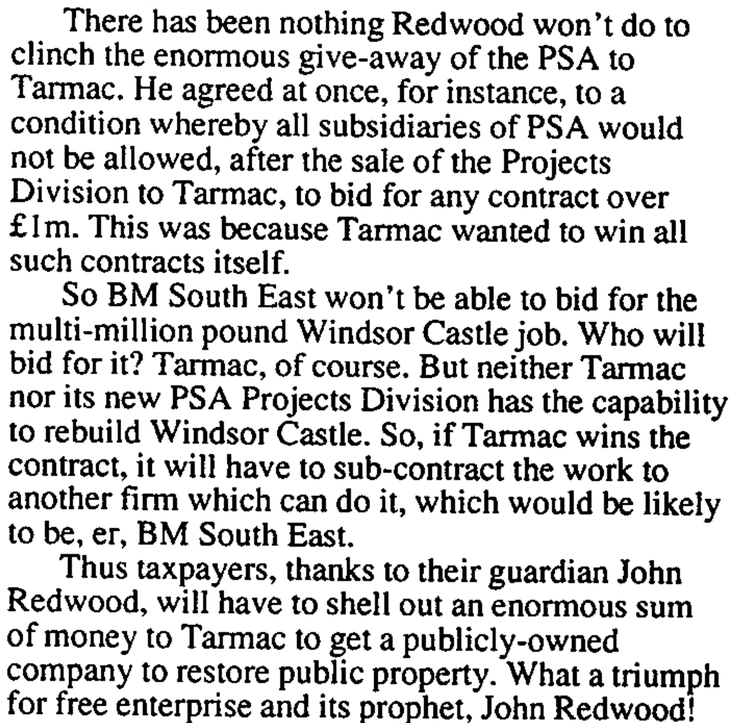
The problem is in terms set down by Redwood's ministry for its sale of the Property Services Agency Projects Division to the big building firm, Tarmac. As *Eye* readers now know, Free Enterprise Redwood has been falling over himself to dish out public money to this big contributor to Tory party funds in exchange for them being good enough to take over the substantial assets of the PSA, without conditions.

There has been nothing Redwood won't do to clinch the enormous give-away of the PSA to Tarmac. He agreed at once, for instance, to a condition whereby all subsidiaries of PSA would not be allowed, after the sale of the Projects Division to Tarmac, to bid for any contract over £1m. This was because Tarmac wanted to win all such contracts itself.

So BM South East won't be able to bid for the multi-million pound Windsor Castle job. Who will bid for it? Tarmac, of course. But neither Tarmac nor its new PSA Projects Division has the capability to rebuild Windsor Castle. So, if Tarmac wins the contract, it will have to sub-contract the work to another firm which can do it, which would be likely to be, er, BM South East.

Thus taxpayers, thanks to their guardian John Redwood, will have to shell out an enormous sum of money to Tarmac to get a publicly-owned company to restore public property. What a triumph for free enterprise and its prophet, John Redwood!

Naturally the fact that the hugely-valuable BM South East now can't bid for anything over £1m will be taken into account when the firm is flogged off next year for a snip — another stupendous deal for the taxpayer.



"Peace on earth, goodwill towards men – or the Marines will come and kick ass"

NOT CONTENT with doubling and trebling their salaries, the chairmen and chief executives of the new water companies have been revelling in their enormous share options.

Dennis Grove, chairman of North West Water has 122,250 such options, worth £249,000; John Bellak of Severn Trent has 114,731 (worth £220,000); William Courtney at Southern Water 100,000, worth £187,000. And they (or rather their "remuneration committees") have been busy dishing out even more options. Grove gets another 94,000 and Courtney, who is quick to complain if anyone gets cross about his vast salary, another 90,000.

It would be a pity not to mention Thames Water, whose chairman Sir Roy Watts never ceases to write to the papers about the wonders of his company. Watts has been lushed up with another 109,000 options, worth about £150,000 over the next couple of years, and is specially proud of Thames for its remarkable leadership in the options race. The total value of share options dished out to a handful of top executives by Thames when it was privatised was £3,805,720, which was miles out in the lead (though Welsh Water ran a good second with £2.6m).

AN INTERESTING example of the government pressure to come to the aid of Saddam Hussein has found its way to the *Eye* straight from the Standard Chartered bank.

In 1986, a report was commissioned by the bank's economics department on the advisability of investing in the government of Iraq. The report studied all the usual information and concluded, not surprisingly, that Iraq was a hopeless risk. It was engaged in a war with Iran which it was losing and which drained it of all its foreign currency and most of its oil revenue. It was, the report concluded, most unlikely that any return could be guaranteed from investment there.

The report went to the bank's managing director, John Macwilliam, and that seemed the end of the matter. But soon afterwards the bank started to get nudges and winks from its "advisers" close to the government (chiefly MI5 and MI6 operatives) that Iraq was the flavour of the year. Any investment in Iraqi government stocks, was Whitehall's advice, would be backed by the government and cement the already firm relationship between the Tories and their friends in the City.

The response was instant, if not over-generous. A sum believed to be not a billion pounds less than £50 million was promptly invested by Standard Chartered in the Iraqi government, which used it (inevitably) to test superguns in the South Atlantic.

History does not relate whether the bank got its money back from Iraq or from Whitehall. All inquiries on this matter should be made to the former publicity manager of Standard Chartered, who at the time of the Iraq report was shooting up the ladder in the Conservative government. The name of the young minister was John Major.

THE department of trade may feel able to grant a subsidiary of GEC consent to begin talks with the Iraqis about the first stage of a telecommunications project worth up to £3 billion, but some smaller British companies are faring less well in dealings with Saddam Hussein.

Southwark crown court will soon hear charges brought by customs and excise against employees of Capriwood Ltd. Their alleged offence is to have been caught supplying spares for an Iraqi fruit juice manufacturing plant since the end of the Gulf war without the appropriate licences.

STREET of SHAME

THE INCREASINGLY self-important Andreas Whittam Strobes hosted an all-day conference of the great and the good last week to promote his "Manifesto for Economic Recovery".

Before lecturing the government on its failings, the *Indescribablyboring*'s supremo should perhaps devote some attention to economic problems in his own backyard. Sales of the newspaper have plummeted to a four-year low of 360,000. Staff morale is rock-bottom, and Strobes has been unable to stem a flow of deflections — most recently of founder-contributors Alexander Chancellor and Lord Rees-Mogg.

While Strobes is busy trying to run the country, the *Indie* is often edited these days by his deputy, the Cuban-heeled lothario Matthew Symonds, whose approach to journalism is, to say the least, unadventurous.

"The trouble with Matthew," as one hack observed last week, "is that if someone in authority tells him something, he tends to believe it." Thus when other newspapers reported that the comptroller and auditor-general was investigating the treasury's "legal aid" to Norman Lamont, the *Independent* downplayed the news — because the head of the treasury, Sir Terry Burns, had rung Symonds to assure him that the affair was "a non-story".

Hence, too, the paper's eccentric coverage of the royal separation. After Major's Commons announcement, the *Indie* newsdesk told Symonds that Tory MPs were incredulous at the idea that Princess Di might still become queen; nor did many of them believe that divorce could be avoided. "Nonsense," Symonds replied. "These MPs are ignorant. I *know* the story." He insisted on running an absurdly complacent headline across the top of the *Indie*'s front page: "Royal couple have no plans to divorce and accession to the throne will not be affected."

Whatever gave him that idea? Why, he had received a telephone call from Buckingham Palace telling him so!

SOCIALIST Lord (Clive to my friends) Hollick responded almost at once to the piece about him in the last *Eye*.

He agreed to meet certain selected hacks at the *Daily Mirror*, of whose controlling company he is a non-executive director (and, he hopes, future chairman).

The angry journalists told Hollick that the *Mirror* was meant to be a Labour paper, but that editor Banks and chief executive David Montgomery were refusing to negotiate with trade unionists. Hollick smiled sweetly and promised to "take all this on board".

The result is that the editor and chief executive are now even more contemptuous in their attitude to the hacks,

A large number of journalists and their spouses have been writing to Labour MPs and Labour party officials demanding that Hollick be relieved of the Labour whip in the Lords.

AFTER the festive season the *Sunset Times* will need a new literary editor, as the present incumbent, John Walsh, takes over the helm of the *Independent* magazine.

The *ST* salary is £60,000 — more than any other newspaper pays its books editor and, indeed, more than most authors and publishers earn. So there ought to be no shortage of eager candidates.

Walsh's recommendation was that he should be succeeded by his amiable but obscure deputy, Harry Ritchie. But Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill wanted someone a bit more famous. So, in the past two months Neill's sidekick, Sue Douglas, has tried to headhunt almost everyone who is anyone in literary London.

She has offered the job to A N Wilson, Victoria Glendinning, Mark Lawson of the *Indie*, Blake Morrison of the *Sindie* and Alan Jenkins of the *TLS*. She has even approached former *ST* literary editor Claire Tomalin — a Wapping refusenik — and, more boldly still, the managing director of Chatto & Windus, Carmen Callil.

But in each case the dread words "Andrew Neill wondered if you'd like to work with him..." have been enough to guarantee a refusal.

WHEN dour Ulsterman David Montgomery took charge of the Mirror Group a few weeks ago, hacks wondered how soon the paper's Irish coverage would be infected by his strong pro-Unionist views.

They had good reason for apprehension: when Montgomery was editor of *Today*, back in the late 1980s, he urged his readers to boycott the *Daily Mirror* because of its support for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. The *Mirror* retaliated with an article written by its Belfast correspondent, John Hicks, accusing Montgomery of intolerance. Last week the selfsame Hicks was suddenly sacked.

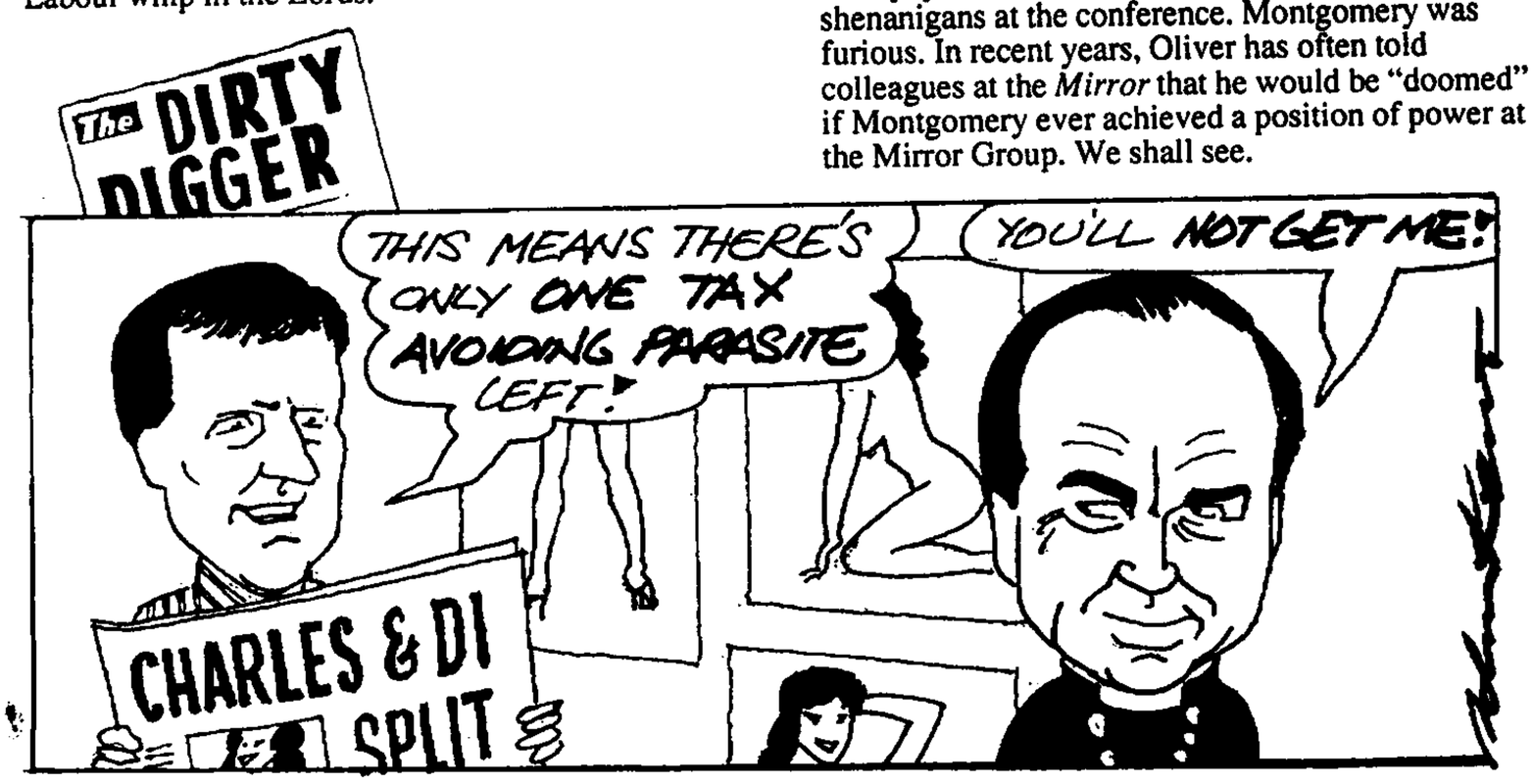
While the new *Mirror* editor, David Banks, insisted the dismissal was not score-settling, hacks are understandably incredulous given Montgomery's prejudices on the subject of Ulster.

Indeed, one of the few newspapers to welcome his appointment was the *Belfast Newsletter*, a sectarian Protestant daily in Northern Ireland. The *Newsletter* of 26 October quoted Montgomery's attack on the *Mirror*'s troops-out policy, in which he wrote of *Mirror* journalists: "All they know of the situation in Northern Ireland they have learned from the tatty pages of their own illiterate rag". The *Newsletter* agreed and said it now looked forward to a "long overdue outbreak of common sense among the *Mirror*'s rabid political scribes".

Some of those scribes are old enough to recall a bizarre episode from the mid-1970s, when *Sunday Mirror* contributors in Belfast angrily complained that pro-Unionist propaganda was being surreptitiously injected into their articles. After an investigation the culprit was fingered as a young downtable sub-editor who worked Saturday shifts in the Manchester office. He was duly sacked. His name? David Montgomery.

Meanwhile, one *Mirror* hack who must be more worried than most about Montgomery's long memory is news reporter Ted Oliver. He and Montgomery were friends at Bangor Grammar School in the early 1960s, but later had a falling-out when they both edited student newspapers — Montgomery at Queen's University Belfast and Oliver at Trinity College, Dublin.

While attending a gathering of student hacks in the West of Ireland, young Oliver tipped off an Irish newspaper about certain extra-curricular shenanigans at the conference. Montgomery was furious. In recent years, Oliver has often told colleagues at the *Mirror* that he would be "doomed" if Montgomery ever achieved a position of power at the Mirror Group. We shall see.



WHEN Gill Palmer, the *Daily Mirror* health correspondent, won an award recently, the *Mirror* glowed with pleasure and joy, carrying a huge report and picture of the cheerful hackette.

But Palmer's speech at the award ceremony was not reported in full. For she went out of her way to mention Walter Mason, the indefatigable sub-editor who almost single-handedly produced the supplement *Mirror Woman* which contained her award-winning pieces.

Exclaimed the angry hackette as she clutched her award: "All I really want is for Walter to get his job back." Mason, needless to say, was sacked by David Montgomery and his placeman editor, David Banks, without a word of explanation, thanks, or notice money.

***SUNDAY EXPRESS* editor Eve Bollard has been conducting a witch-hunt to find out the source of the circulation figures given for her title in the last *Eye*.**

When she read them she was incandescent with rage and had to take most of the week off to recuperate. She was unwell on the Thursday; sufficiently recovered for her regular Friday morning appearance on the BBC's Anne and Nick morning show; but then unwell again on the Saturday and for most of the following week.

In her absence the *Sunday Express* ran an article on its fashion pages under the heading "Hustle for the bustle", in which Sophie Lance described the trend of designers attaching bustles to their catwalk creations. The pull-out quote at the foot of the page read: "At last the time of the big bottom has come"; and a commentator was quoted as saying: "The bottom has always been an erogenous zone. And the bigger the bottom the more excited men get — the bustle accentuates that most exciting body part."

Whether this report was intended as an act of sycophancy towards the editor the hacks call "Rhino Arse", or merely as an offensive in-joke at her expense, is unclear; but it provoked much merriment at the Grey Lubianka.

Meanwhile Bollard was enraged by the fact that the *Sun* had scooped her paper with a story about Anne Diamond having another baby. If she is going to spend all this time going on the box, the least she could do is have an exclusive about the pregnancy of the person on whose show she appears.

At the risk of enraging Bollard yet further, the *Eye*'s impeccable source tells us that circulation for Sunday 22 November was down to 1,647,000 — 21,000 below the figure at which Bollard took over. A recent feature in the *Daily Express* (edited by her husband, Sir Nick Lloyd) listed Bollard among "Britain's most powerful women".

WHEN a survey found that the *Daily Star* and *Today* were the national dailies "most heavily influenced by the public relations industry", *Star* editor Brian "Mussolini" Hitchen told the *Evening Standard* the claim was "absolute rubbish": his newspaper, he insisted angrily, did not give houseroom to PR puffs and plugs.

How, one wonders, does this tally with a letter sent last month by the *Star*'s executive editor Nigel Blundell to the boss of Caribtours, a holiday company?

"I am," he wrote, "just back from Barbados after the most amazing trip — full of sun, sea, rum punch and marvellous people. I cannot thank you and Carol Rossell enough." He would soon be "liaising" with Ms Rossell, a Caribtours employee, "over how best to present the benefits of the island and Caribtours".

When the *Eye* mentioned the letter to Hitchen last week he hooted with laughter, though he added: "If the holiday turned out to be crap, no doubt we would have said so".

Blundell was rather less cheerful. It was "a private letter", he said. But he wished us to know — "before you have a bit of fun at my expense" — that he had paid for the holiday himself. What, then, was he thanking Caribtours for? "I'm not commenting."

Nor was Carol Rossell of Caribtours. "That's a cheeky question, isn't it?" she said.

THE *Sun*'s illiteracy goes from bad to worser. RETURN OF A SOCCER LEGAND **screamed a top-of-the-page headline in the rag's Goals supplement last month.**

Either that or Kelvin Mackenzie, not content with thinking like his millions of readers, is now encouraging his hacks to write like them, too.

SIR BOB REID, chairman of British Rail, has privately warned John "Brunel" MacGregor, the transport minister, that as the rail system sinks into the chaos of creeping privatisation, passenger safety will be increasingly at risk.

Morale among BR staff at every level is so low that it could well become "a contributory factor" to accidents which might occur in the long period of anarchy and havoc that will be required for the gestation of the government's crazy franchising scheme.

Thereafter operational control in such a potentially lethal industry will be totally diffused and fragmented. And with four rival quangoes competing to dominate the rail network, the safety buck will no longer stop on the BR chairman's desk because there will no longer be one.

DR MICHAEL CLARK, scientist and Tory MP for Rochford, was extremely effective as chairman of the energy select committee in the last parliament, and was responsible for a series of reports that the government found most embarrassing.

His talent was noticed by British Gas, which decided the best thing to do with a critic was to make him an offer. He was duly appointed a consultant.

But now Clark is a member of the select committee on trade and industry, which has taken over the energy role and is investigating "British energy policy and the market for coal". That of course includes the activities of British Gas. Would his new consultancy affect his role?

British Gas, in a carefully-worded prepared statement, told the *Eye*: "We appointed Michael Clark as a consultant because he has vast experience of the energy scene. However, being aware of the sensitive position he occupies as a member of the DTI select committee, we have suspended our formal working relationship until the inquiries are over."

A spokeswoman added: "It is not unusual for companies to have relationships of this sort with MPs."

Correct. But by suspending the relationship during the present inquiry, British Gas is tacitly recognising that it has made it impossible for him to function in the role where he has been most effective.

FOR MANY years Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, has been complaining about the bookings of Commons banqueting halls by Tory MPs who earn vast fees from outside businesses just for playing host at banquets.

House of Commons banquets are much sought-after by PR men and their clients all over the world for "celebrations" and "get-togethers" of top people. Mr Flynn has been used to getting at least some information about the bookings from the House of Commons Commission and its chairman, Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrats' economic affairs spokesman.

Now, however, Mr Beith, who in all other matters is a tremendous champion of the right to know, freedom of information acts, etc, etc, has decided not to release any further information about the banqueting halls. He's even refused to tell Mr Flynn the political affiliations of the people who book the banqueting rooms (information which was readily provided three years ago).

What is Mr Beith frightened of? Can he really be protecting Tory snouts in the Commons troughs? Or is it that he has been told that many more "outside interests" would book the banqueting halls if they could be sure their identities would be kept secret?

THE "Glendagate" forged proxy votes scandal in Hampstead, north London, vanished from the headlines as quickly as it appeared, but the background to the affair is curious.

The story, written by John Merry, was released to the press by an agency called Edit UK, based in Darlington, and it quoted the reaction of Carl Gibson, the new Conservative party agent in Glenda Jackson's Hampstead & Highgate constituency.

"This is a very grave and serious matter," he said. "In view of the confirmation from Scotland Yard that offences have been committed we are now considering applying to the high court for a writ to overturn the result."

But why did the story emerge from Darlington? It just so happens during the general election, Gibson was the Conservative agent in Peter Mandelson's Hartlepool constituency, and it was through this connection that he knew John Merry, who had assisted local Tories with their campaign.

Far from being a "grave and serious matter", Glendagate concerned just two forged votes out of approximately 1,000 proxy votes — hardly a significant number. This was confirmed by the police, the crown prosecution service (CPS) and the electoral services department in Camden.

Was Gibson aware of this when he tipped off John Merry about the forged votes and pontificated about the possibility of high court action? If so, it was a cynical exercise in smearing the local MP. The story made the nationals and a front-page headline in the *Evening Standard*; and even prompted the ludicrous Tory sage Sir Peregrine Worsthorne to praise Oliver Letwin, the failed Tory candidate in Jackson's constituency, in an item in his *Sunday Torygraph* column.

Worsthorne claimed wistfully that he had been told, e'en on election night, that the poll in Hampstead & Highgate had been rigged, thus depriving parliament of the presence of the supremely talented Letwin. Now that the true provenance of the Glendagate story has been revealed, Worsthorne presumably no longer believes Ms Jackson was elected by foul means.

FOR THE past year Martyn Jones has been living in a flat built for the homeless in Rhosllannerchrugog, Wrexham, Wales. This is in spite of the fact that he has a subsidised home in London and an annual salary of £31,000 as Labour MP for Clwyd North.

Jones's defence is that the flats built by Clwyd-Alyn Housing Association are too expensive for homeless people at £40-a-week rent. But instead of protesting publicly about the extortionate rents, Jones is treating his homeless person's flat as if it were a holiday home (since he spends the week at Westminster). Jones claims that his £10,000 accommodation allowance is not enough to pay for his London flat, which suggests he is paying an extortionate rent in London as well.

RIGHT-WING Western Goals activist A.V.R. Smith has gone to ground following *Eye* reports of his entrepreneurial arms-dealing activities in conjunction with fellow Western Goals officer — now a convicted fraudster — Gregory Lauder-Frost.

Last month Lauder-Frost was sentenced to two years imprisonment for embezzling £111,000 from the Riverside health authority in west London, where he worked as an accountant in the payroll section.

Police believe he may have salted away as much as half a million pounds of NHS funds, part of which was used to finance arms deals. Amazingly, though, Riverside has no plans to pursue Lauder-Frost (who has substantial assets) for recovery.

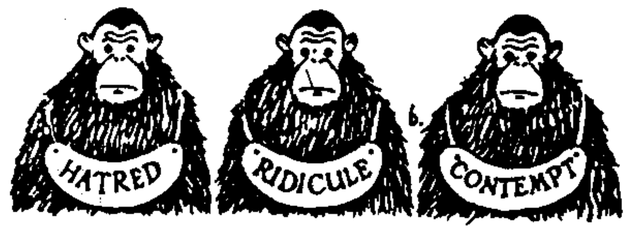
Lauder-Frost deserves full marks for his chutzpah: in July he wrote to the editor of his local newspaper, the *Hammersmith & Fulham Chronicle*, complaining about its coverage of his case and suggesting that "the Riverside Health Authorities [*sic*] Audit Department may come out of this entire business thoroughly discredited."

A.V.R. Smith, meanwhile, is still being investigated by the police on the grounds that he may yet have control of funds belonging to Lauder-Frost. Earlier this year, Smith travelled to the Phillipines where he met defence minister Fidel Ramos (now president). Representing a company called Predator Industries Inc, based in Maryland, Smith offered to sell Ramos state-of-the-art river and coastal patrol gunboats. Since Frauder-Lost's conviction, Smith has contacted a Florida-based commodoties company and told them Frauder-Lost is travelling and therefore unavailable, but otherwise it is business as usual as far as he is concerned.

With the conviction of Frauder-Lost and the unhealthy amount of attention being paid to A.V.R. Smith by the authorities, Western Goals is in disarray. Two of its leading members, Stuart Millson and Jonathan Bowden (the treasurer), have formed a new faction for Conservatives, Unionists and nationalists called the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, declaring it to be "totally loyal to the Conservative Party and Great Britain... and 100% against Major and the present leadership."

Its policy aims include "a strong Europe of independent nation-states; the political and military defeat of the Provisional IRA; a complete end to all immigration; the monocultural hegemony of the majority [*What that? Ed.*]; the recriminalisation of male homosexuality"; and various other extreme positions. The Revolutionary Conservative Caucus is being bankrolled by Stuart Millson's employer, Roy Fairs, owner of *This England* magazine, who bankrolled the Anti-Federalist League candidate in Cheltenham.

'Backbiter'



LIBEL NEWS

CHERUBIC Tory MP Rupert Allason will by now be enjoying the £225,000 he won in libel damages from Mirror Group Newspapers over its attack on him during the Nicholas Davies affair.

On the day the settlement was announced in court, Allason was asked by a reporter whether he would be giving the sum to charity. He answered that he had donated the entire proceeds of a previously settled lawsuit arising from the Davies affair to charity, the inference being that his charitable instincts would be just as readily exercised with regard to this second award.

But Allason's remarks were a tad disingenuous. The lawsuit to which he referred was a libel action against Roy Greenslade's book *Maxwell's Fall*, which described Allason (aka espionage historian Nigel West) as a "spy fantasist". In comparison the damages were a meagre £1,000.

Alistair Campbell, the *Daily Mirror*'s political editor, subsequently attacked Allason for not announcing that he would donate his handsome award to Mirror Group pensioners. Yet this seems grotesquely hypocritical. Campbell was one of Cap'n Bob's most eager sycophants, but has so far made no announcement to the effect that he, Campbell, will be donating a portion of his vast salary to the pensioners.

THE Mozambique Information Office recently sent out a news review whose lead story was headed: "Bruce Anderson now advising Mozambique Institute".

The Mozambique Institute is the UK lobbying arm of Renamo, the right-wing opposition in Mozambique, and the story told how Anderson had been expelled from South Africa for his involvement in gun-running from Renamo to the Inkatha movement of Chief Buthelezi. It also explained that Anderson was a British citizen and that before moving to Africa he "had been a member of a British neo-nazi organisation, the National Front, notorious for its hatred of black people", in spite of which he had been accepted into membership of Inkatha and had indeed become chairman of an Inkatha branch in a Johannesburg suburb.

Those who know "Brute" Anderson, the *Sunday Express* columnist and biographer of John Major, may have been a little surprised by the allegation that he was a gun-runner or that he was living in South Africa. *The Weekly Journal*, a black newspaper, became very excited over this information and rushed into print.

Unfortunately, it turned out that there were two Bruce Andersons. The *Sunday Express* Bruce Anderson, who *has* joined the Advisory Council of the Mozambique Institute, has now sued for libel and the newspaper has taken the precaution of apologising for the error. However, apart from the gun-running allegation, it is possible to see how the confusion occurred. After all, "Brute" has never hesitated to ventilate his disapproval of the Marxist Frelimo regime in Mozambique, even once regretting that ex-president Samora Machel had died in a plane crash when he should have been hanged. Moreover, he has been a prominent cheerleader for Inkatha in the British press and anyone who has encountered "Brute" at party conferences will recall his opinions about "wogs" and "coons".

Perhaps the South Africa-based Bruce Anderson will now sue for the plainly defamatory suggestion that he is a columnist for the *Sunday Express*.

Grovel

STILL no Christmas card from my good friend Ebenezer Heseltine, who so modestly appointed himself president of the board of trade.

To save money, I learn, Hezza has decided to ban the official Christmas card. *This is a capital idea*, of course, and one that could only be topped by proscribing Christmas itself.

It is all a long way from the days of humbug at trade and industry when the stylish Lord Suit was in charge. When Young left the department the event was marked by a lavish party (long after he had actually gone), all charged to the public purse.

● *IT WAS Norman Tebbit, cro-magnon prototype for Essex Man, who dreamed up the cricket test to gauge the patriotism of immigrants to our shores. But what about a "Kipling" test to ascertain the testee's cultural integration?*

Sadly, to judge by his performance on a recent Desert Island Discs, if such a test were in place the patriotic peer would himself be packed on to a tramp steamer with a one-way ticket to his planet of origin and no appeal to the home office.

For Tebbit announced to his audience that the famous words "I vow to thee my country, all earthly things above" were written by Kipling. And they were, a kind reader informs me, in fact written by Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice.

Fancy Lord Tebbit not knowing that: he who made so much about bias and inaccuracy at the BBC!

IT IS A long time since I last reported the aggressive tendencies of Paul "Raging Bull" Pickering, the comic novelist whose name strikes fear into London's publishing fraternity, but he has carefully been maintaining his reputation in this regard.

His latest outburst, however, has provoked widespread rejoicing among members of the Groucho Club, since it is likely that "Raging Bull" will now be banned from the premises hereafter.

Pickering recently spent the evening at the club, becoming progressively more tired and emotional. When he drinks, his body becomes pneumatic and his eyes start to bulge in a manic stare. On this occasion, he was with his wife Alison who was, sadly, unable to offer a restraining influence. A dispute over the scale of the bill resulted in him storming up to the cashier's booth and announcing: "I'm sick of being ripped off by this club." He then pushed the credit card machine at the cashier.

At this moment, the burly though pacific and scrupulously polite German waiter, Hannis, appeared to deal with a bill, only to be thrust aside by Pickering. Hannis told Pickering to get lost, but was not prepared for what happened next. Pickering bit him on the shoulder and threatened him with further violence. The Groucho's manager, Liam Carson, was called and after suffering verbal abuse and threats persuaded Pickering to leave the building.

Twenty minutes later, after Carson had gone home, Pickering returned to the club intent on tormenting one of the manageresses. Eventually the police were called and a sheepish Pickering was escorted from the premises.

Hannis, meanwhile, has been advised to obtain tetanus and rabies shots from his doctor.

WILL Herr Wilhelm "Bill" Davis, the first German to become *Obergruppenführer* of the British Tourist Authority, be reappointed to the post when his three-year tenure expires, and, more importantly, will he be knighted?

I'm afraid the signs are not encouraging for the house magazine magnate and former Thatcher speech-writer.

The UK tourist industry hasn't exactly flourished under his leadership, as witness the much-increased balance of payments deficit on foreign travel. The UK tourism malaise is even reflected in the BTA's house magazine, *In Britain*, which is a shadow of its former self and was sold to the late Cap'n Rob soon after Herr Wilhelm's arrival.

As for the prospect of a knighthood, there is an unhappy precedent. Herr Wilhelm's immediate predecessor, Hong Kong mogul Duncan "Cathay" Bluck, was the first BTA chairman to leave without a K, even after six years in the job. Bill should perhaps now take a short winter break in sunny Frinton to consider his future.

I WAS amazed to see the *Spectator*, usually such a discerning journal, lowering its tone by inviting Nigel Pratt-Dumpster to write its Diary last week.

Still, Nigel's contribution was not without its delights. Musing on "the royal family and the extraordinary happenings of the past nine months, which began with the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York", Dumpster informed readers that these events "have not surprised me in the slightest".

Oh no? In March this year, when Richard Kay and Andrew Morton wrote their famous scoop for the *Daily Mail* revealing that Fergie and Andy were about to separate, Dumpster assured the paper's then editor, Sir David English, that the story was nonsense. If the couple were to separate, Dumpster explained, he would be the first to know; and he had heard nothing to suggest that a separation was imminent.

One day later, much to poor Nigel's surprise, the palace confirmed that the Porks were indeed to part.

● *I WAS ALSO surprised to see Dumpster enthusiastically supporting Peter Palumbo's scheme to demolish eight Victorian buildings in the City of London, opposite Mansion House, and replace them with a huge modern office block.*

Presumably this cannot be the same Nigel Dumpster who is currently whingeing about a "vulgar" garden wall that is to be erected by one of his neighbours in the south-west London suburb of Ham? According to the Richmond Borough Herald, Dumpster is urging his fellow-protesters in Ham to "arm themselves with sticks of dynamite and demolish this eyesore". Why, then, is he so keen on the erection of eyesores elsewhere?

Pip Pip!

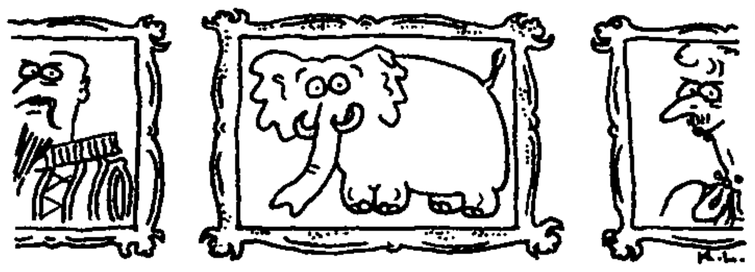
Pseuds Corner

"[The Jimi Hendrix version of *Star Spangled Banner*] ... one of the most powerful political and social critiques of American life that anybody has ever made with a musical instrument..."

KALEIDOSCOPE
Radio 4

Lucien Freud was born in Berlin in 1912 in the fashionable district near the Tiergarten (which I remember also as the elegant park where I played when I was a child with a Siamese princess called Tipevanna).

DANIEL FARSON
Harpers & Queen



With which historical figure do you most identify?
The elephant — gentle, hurting nothing and endangered.

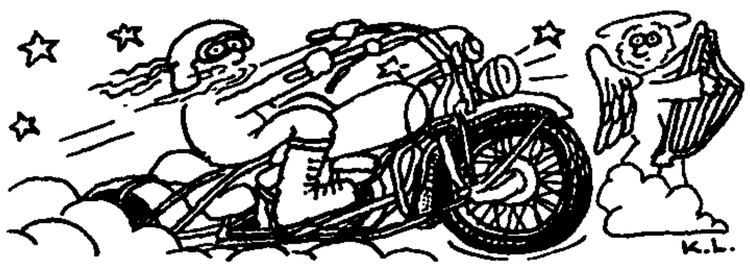
GLORIA STEINEM
Guardian Weekend Magazine

Philip Lodge (Newport) *Principles of melodic construction in the songs of ABBA.*
Richard Middleton (Open University) *Repertory, authorship, and the construction of meaning in the Eurythmics' hit recordings.*

Royal Musical Association annual conference

Caryn [Franks] used to be a fashion editor. She has a sort of seat-gripping ring to her voice — I just love her leftist, radical angularity.

JEFF BANKS on his Clothes Show co-presenter
The Times



I'm beginning to think it's time I tried to make peace with that war that's raged inside of me for so many years. That hate that's buried deep in my soul has to go. So I'm going to steer my big Harley Davidson motorcycle and keep moving for as long as I can. Who knows, maybe there's a place for my kind — a shelter, a sanctuary where I can just touch the breeze, feel the wind, taste the air, just ride.

MICKEY ROURKE
Sunday Times Magazine

So my placement board is very important. At a recent dinner party we had an Omani friend of mine who has the best cellar in Muscat of anyone I know. His great hero when he was a student in London was Laurence Olivier, so to match with him I had Tarquin Olivier (his son) along with his wife, who is Turkish and knows the Oman well. Then we had Geoffrey Palmer and his wife, Sally, and we chose them because Tarquin had seconded, and I had proposed, Geoffrey for the Garrick Club. I do think it's so important to get all this sort of thing right.

DEREK NIMMO
The Times

CONTRIBUTORS: Jill A. Browne, D. de Villiers, Anon, Richard Abram, R. Babington, Anon, Tom Donnelly.

£10 paid for entries

ITV

A Touch of Frost
(Yorkshire)
Between The Lines
(BBC1)

THE NEW ITV cop series *A Touch of Frost*, just begun on Sunday nights, and the BBC cop series *Between The Lines*, just finished on Friday nights, provide an interesting contrast between two different ways of approaching drama. Let's, as they say in these things, get hold of Forensics and have a butcher's at the evidence.

THE DETECTIVE: *A Touch of Frost* features DI "Jack" Frost, a bit of a rough diamond but regarded by the force as a gem on account of his clear-up rate. How might one put it? Well, he doesn't always play by the rule book but he gets the results.

Between The Lines is set in the Metropolitan Police's internal criminal investigations bureau, the police's policemen, office canaries. Its central character DI Tony Clark is therefore forced, in an unusual ethical complexity for this genre, to tussle each week with the morality of doing the right thing. It is the first television police series to use this setting and — although *Morse*, *The Bill* and others have dabbled in one-off rotten-apple plots — the first mainstream cop show to deal, each and every week, with internal police corruption.

THE DETECTIVE'S HOME-LIFE: "Jack" Frost has a wife who dies of cancer in the first episode. This rather cynical attempt to attach instant dignity and interest to his character is also an echo of DI Taggart's wife-in-a-wheelchair, although the real agenda is to borrow some of the plangency and poignancy which attaches to Chief Inspector Morse through his lack of family attachments.

DI Clark, by contrast, has a far more complicated relationship with the sympathy of the viewer. A selfish and ruthless sexual bully, he hops around the bedrooms of London, using his tummy truncheon on a vast network of screwed-up women, one of whom subsequently commits suicide. Crucially, it is always clear that Clark's integrity is relative. Twice, he thumps suspects.

THE DETECTIVE'S TEAM: In *A Touch of Frost*, "Jack" Frost is unwillingly teamed in the first episode with cocky young graduate DC Barnard, the nephew of the chief constable. This winter-spring, country-metropolitan clash allows for some tart illustrations of the changing nature of policemen. A bit like gruff Taggart and his ponce-boy constables, or, indeed, Morse and Lewis.

CATCHPHRASE
This week - Radio Money programme advisor Barbara Thomas
ROBERT THOMASON
"... and make sure hubby has good life insurance"

In *Between The Lines*, Clark's oppos are Mo, a Scottish feminist lesbian (both tendencies sympathetically depicted), and Harry, a raddled Liverpudlian fag-smoker later revealed to have a secret nightlife as a competition ballroom dance. This eternally ambivalent triangle permits a series of unusually subtle reflections on hierarchical (and patriarchal) relationships in the police force.

THE SOURCES: *A Touch of Frost* is adapted — like the subsequent episodes — from the little-known crime novels of R.D. Wingfield. It is hard not to suspect that a Yorkshire Television executive, staring at the ratings for *Inspector Morse*, sent a lackey down to the Crime Bookshop with the instruction to find any detective books not yet televised.

Between The Lines was created and written specifically for television by J.C. Wilsher, who had served his apprenticeship on cop plots with scripts for *The Bill*. (This career path is in the grand old tradition of television drama, *Z Cars* having stabled a whole wave of TV dramatists and directors.)

STYLE: *A Touch of Frost* is lavishly filmed in two-hour self-contained episodes. Like, again, *Inspector Morse*. Do we, as they say in these things, begin to see a pattern, guv'nor? Indeed, symptomatically if not deliberately, the first *Frost* story featured a scene in which Frost and Barnard got heavy with a schoolteacher in his classroom after the disappearance of a girl, an exact reproduction, in look and content, of a scene in an earlier *Morse*.

Between The Lines attempted the most ambitious of all drama structures: the 13-week run, in which individual storylines were opened and resolved each week, but with a grand conspiratorial sub-plot gathering pace across the series, and some of the weekly storylines feeding back in to that. It was also noticeable for striking small details. For example, a deputy chief constable, interviewed on suspicion of corruption, accidentally signed from habit the interviewing officer line on the confession rather than the space left for the suspect.

CASTING: *A Touch of Frost* got one of the highest TV audiences ever (an estimated 18 million) for its first episode. Good luck to them, but cynics might object that the least risky ratings formula at this time would be "something a bit like *Morse*, but with David Jason in it". This is what Yorkshire has done.

A second series of *Between The Lines* has been commissioned, but audiences of around seven million have led many newspapers, including broadsheets such as the *Observer*, to describe the show as a failure. There is room for both kinds of show on television, but work of the originality and ambition of *Between The Lines* depends absolutely on the acceptance that ratings are not the final judge of success. Seven million viewers might be accounted a triumph for work of this complexity.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

THE only justification for making Michael Checkland director-general of the Beeb was that as an accountant who had never made a TV programme he would make the corporation more financially accountable to the licence payer by tightening up on waste and inefficiency.

No wonder he delegated Will Wyatt, his managing director of Network Television, to admit to the press that the BBC had accidentally overspent by a "substantial sum".

Having spent most of the previous week denying that the overspend was more than £20 million, the corporation has now admitted privately that it is at least £58 million — more than 10 per cent of the overall budget. It may yet be more. Incredibly the "loss" is the result of a series of bungles in the way new accounting procedure changes — designed to tighten financial controls — were introduced over a number of years.

New computer software failed to register lower figures as money was spent. At least £20 million was allocated to both BBC1 and BBC2 and gratefully disposed of by free-spending controllers who must have thought *Eldorado* really *had* arrived. Worst of all, someone apparently forgot to stop paying for a whole range of facilities and even staff who had been rationalised as part of the economies of the last five years.

The root of the problem is Producers' Choice, the means by which the law of the market is being introduced to the BBC. Producers are now encouraged to shop around for services, and individual departments to charge the "going rate" for services rendered within TV Centre. The consequences are obvious: more and more people spend more and more time invoicing their chums and chasing triplicate tuppenny payments.

This runs directly counter to the declared aim of cutting paper-pushing in order to release more money for programme making. Obviously the system was never intended to be taken too seriously. Sensible senior managers have always told staff that the market ethos was more for external appearance than an internal reality. The pragmatists are now blaming the free-market zealots for taking it all to heart.

But the complacency and hypocrisy of senior managers in the face of the overspend remains staggering. And they still apparently expect employees and public alike to believe that the resignation of the corporation's finance director, Ian Phillips, was nothing to do with the overspend.

But Phillips is only the scapegoat for the complete cock-up of JACs — journal automated credits system — introduced to ape the banking equivalent, BACs. At a private dinner about a month ago, Phillips is reported to have warned that the whole BBC financial system was about to implode. This is just the beginning. He gives it until April 1993.

And Will Wyatt apparently sees no contradiction in commenting that "licence-fee payers deserve an explanation" while refusing to publish the audit from Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte commissioned (not by management, please note) but by the BBC's governors.

But if the governors have finally risen from their torpor, the same cannot be said of corporation

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
"IT'S THAT TIME WHEN WE TURN OUR THOUGHTS TO THE MAN WHO WAS HAILED AS A MESSIAH...
ALL SOULS XMAS SERVICE
WHO HAD MANY FOLLOWERS ...
WHO CONDEMNED THE WORD OF MAMMON ...
BAR
AND SACK HIM!"
"£60 million overspend on trebles all round!"
SITS VAC FOR EX DGs
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

Royal workers at Balmoral are switching to satellite TV.

Dishes are springing up on the walls of estate cottages — with Royal approval.

News of the World

CONTRIBUTOR: Caroline Patterson.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

staff, who supposedly include some of the best investigative journalists in the country. After years of being told that the budget doesn't stretch to a dispatch bike to cross London or a first class stamp, it hardly seems worth pointing out that the overspend is more than all the real savings made during the whole of Checkland's governorship.

APPEARING on British television can be a risky business for citizens of Saudi Arabia, especially if they happen to disagree with the enlightened policies of that country's rulers.

Nihad Ghadri, a former adviser to the royal family turned dissident, made a brief appearance on Channel 4's recent *Dispatches* programme about some of the more interesting aspects of Mark Thatcher's astonishingly successful business career. This did not appear to go down well in some quarters, least of all, it is said, with Baroness Thatcher, who would no doubt prefer her son's business affairs to be kept out of the public eye. Mr Ghadri and at least one British book publisher, as well as Channel 4, had other ideas, though.

But following the programme, Mr Ghadri received a telephone call from a Saudi official requesting him to hand his Saudi passport back to the authorities. So sensitive were the Saudis about the programme that on hearing about it the royals ordered more than 10 copies to be flown out to the Middle East.

No doubt any anger on their part could not have been helped by Tam Dalyell, the sharp-witted Labour MP, who repeated some of Mr Ghadri's thoughts on Mark Thatcher's role in the giant Al Yamamah Anglo-Saudi arms deal in the Commons two days after the *Dispatches* programme.

DAVID FROST'S new Sunday morning programme on BBC1, starting in the new year, is clearly going to be hot stuff.

Middle-aged male newsreaders such as Chris Low and Andrew Harvey have been told they cannot present the news bulletin which will appear half-way through the show, even if they are on the duty rota. The job must always be done by a woman — Jill Dando, Moira Stewart, etc. And for why? So that Frostie can create some "sexual chemistry".

At least one female newsreader is said to be revolted by the idea of being forced to flirt on screen with David Frost at 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning. Perhaps she can recall what happened the last time Frost was involved in an attempt to create "sexual chemistry" on television at breakfast-time, in the early days of TV-am: premature ejection of almost all the presenters.

IS THE SUN about to set on Sunset Radio, Greater Manchester's terminally dull "ethnic" FM station?

Sunset is run by colourful Iraqi businessman Hassan Al Jaizani, a failed nightclub owner and DHSS property magnate whose empire is in ruins.

While a Mareva injunction prevents him from selling his shares in the ailing station — or from buying more — Sunset continues to lose money. The injunction was brought by Pakistani businessman Badshah Khan, who lent Al Jaizani £200,000 to fund Sunset.

Al Jaizani wrote him a promissory note for at least £160,000 and paid him back in instalments with cheques. Much to Khan's chagrin, six of the cheques, totalling £63,000, bounced. Khan has asked lawyers to sort it out. Stay tuned.

HACKWATCH No 35: Royal clichémongers

DID RELENTLESS scandal-seeking by the press hasten the end of Charles and Diana's marriage? The question has been discussed *ad infinitum* recently — and, surprise surprise, the newspapers have concluded that they have nothing to apologise for. Their reports of rifts and tiffs have, they argue, been entirely vindicated.

But while the content of royal press coverage has been minutely dissected, its cliché-spattered style has escaped comment. From the moment of her engagement in 1981, Lady Diana Spencer was described in an absurdly unreal way, like a character from a romantic novel. When writing a royal story, it seemed, even the most hard-bitten hack would instantly reach for the Sylvie Krin thesaurus.

Robert Lacey's 1982 biography of Diana, *Princess*, set the standard for all who followed: "Once upon a time," Lacey wrote, "there was quite an ordinary girl who became a princess. It is a short story, and very simple. She fell in love with a prince and he, warmed by her affection, fell in love with her. When the world found out about it, everyone rejoiced. Loyal subjects in tens of thousands thronged the streets to cheer her on her wedding day. The Archbishop of Canterbury, dressed in shimmering silver, compared this young girl's story to a fairy tale, and no one could seriously quarrel with that comparison."

Indeed not: why go to the trouble of dreaming up a new comparison when an old one is readily to hand? Thus, when the Waleses' separation was announced last Wednesday, the most highly-paid scribes of the Fourth Estate had but a single thought. Here are highlights from the following morning's papers:

END OF THE FAIRYTALE — front-page headline, *Daily Express*.

END OF THE FAIRYTALE — front-page headline, *Daily Mail*.

"The fairytale marriage that was doomed from the start" — headline in *Today*.

"Sombre Charles and pensive Diana, separated by 250 miles yesterday as their fairytale marriage finally crumbled" — front page photo-caption, *Daily Star*.

"When Charles kissed Diana on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, in the heady afterglow of a fairytale wedding watched by a billion romantics around the world, she had love in her eyes — and doubts in her heart... Now Diana has moved out and the separation is official. End of fairytale" — Michael Hellicar, *Daily Star*.

"With the eyes of 750 million people around the world upon her, the former kindergarten teacher with the schoolgirl looks was playing out a fairy tale, the dazzling quality of which had never been seen before this century. Not since the Queen's Coronation had a royal event so touched the hearts of the nation. Everything seemed magical on that summer day in 1981... Yesterday, the couple acknowledged that the fairy tale had come to a close" — Charles Oulton, the *Independent*.

"The British people will be dismayed, because they cherished the fairy tale of this royal romance between such a handsome and charming couple" — editorial, the *Daily Telegraph*.

"The nation yearned for this marriage to be one of the lucky ones. To be, as it seemed on that July day 11 years ago, a fairytale marriage" — editorial, *Daily Express*.

"In the end, everyone wants royalty to be a fairytale. And fairytales don't have unhappy endings" — Christopher Wilson, *Daily Express*.

"We have witnessed in all its awful detail the gradual disintegration of her marriage and now, looking back, perhaps we expected too much of both her and her husband. But we can't blame ourselves for the end of their fairytale..." — Jonathan Cooper, *Daily Express*.

"These are the pictures which chart the beginning of a royal fairytale..." — Frances Hubbard, *Daily Express*.

"After 11 years, the fairytale marriage is over in all but name..." — Richard Kay and Gordon Greig, *Daily Mail*.

"It was the wedding of the century, a fairytale watched by 500 million people on which it seemed the hopes of the nation — and the future of the monarchy — depended... The fairytale continued in style with a triumphant tour of their principality in Wales... Now the nation held its breath for news of a child to bless their union... Diana's magical powers as a fairytale princess continued with the births of two fine sons... Yet within a decade the fairytale had turned to ashes" — Anthony Holden, *Daily Mail*.

"After little more than a decade, the fairytale has ended in tears. Patrick Lichfield's wedding portrait captures the shining hopes of a couple — and of a nation — which have now been cruelly disappointed" — photo caption, *Daily Mail*.

"It started as a fairytale romance — but the story soon turned sour" — Samuel James, *Daily Mirror*.

"In fairytales the beautiful Princess kisses a toad and it turns into a handsome young Prince. In real life it happened the other way round" — Barry Wigmore, *Daily Mirror*.

"It is more than the end of a fairytale" — editorial, *Daily Mirror*.

END OF A FAIRYTALE — headline on "12-page royal souvenir" in *Daily Mirror*.

THE BBC is considering privatising its make-up training.

Until recently it took on a small number of keen and apparently talented people to train as make-up artists. They received three months' intensive training (paid, of course), then worked for a further two years as assistants. After another five years they could generally reckon on being put in charge of make-up on a production.

The Beeb's new plan is to offer "BBC Make-up Training" (the three-month course) to anyone, talented or not, who can pay "around £7,000".

The newly "qualified" trainees can then launch themselves into the pool of underemployed freelance film and broadcasting workers with the BBC's blessing — presumably to compete with fully trained people made redundant by the BBC.

The BBC's head of corporate manpower development, Bob Nelson, has said: "We don't want to make the training available to just anyone with money, so we're looking at ways of getting around that problem, perhaps by subsidising certain talented people."

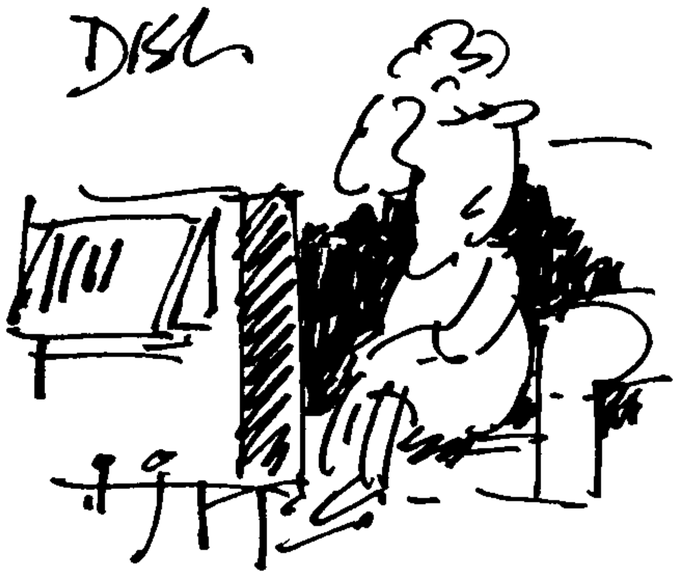
The best way to get round the problem is to scrap the whole daft idea before it starts. But that doesn't fit into the BBC's exciting new plans to become a model corporation for the Thatcherite 80s... er, just in time for the 90s.

THERE was outrage at BSkyB earlier this year when rival broadcasters queried how many satellite dishes were actually in use.

BARB, the neutral industry body which measures ITV and BBC audiences, estimated that only 1.8 million dishes had been installed by the end of 1991. The rival GFK Marketing Services put the figure even lower at 1.6 million.

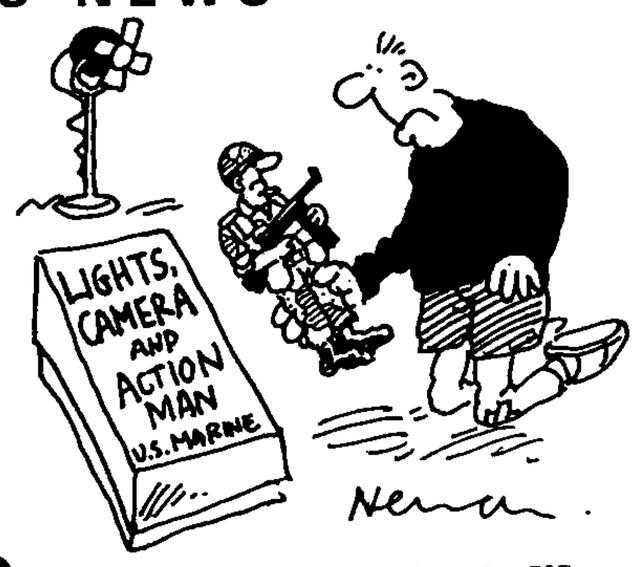
However, Sky hailed another company, Continental Research, which came up with a figure of 2.1 million dishes. This was indubitably correct, and Continental was the most wonderful, accurate and generally brilliant firm of researchers in the galaxy.

Inconveniently, Continental has now come up with a new statistic: a year on year decline in installations from 100,000 dishes a month to just 71,000. Obviously there must be some mistake here, as the figure would imply that people didn't want to see the dreary, repetitive Premier League soccer coverage the Murdoch rags have been promoting so desperately.



"Come quickly — David Mellor's not on"

US NEWS



ONE WOULD never guess that the US president now sending 28,000 troops to Somalia was the same man who earlier this year prevented the UN security council from sending a few thousand well-equipped UN troops.

Then, thousands of dead kids ago, it would have been cheap and quick to solve the problem. But it would have cost the US more money in peace-keeping assessments to the UN.

And just like the opening shots of the Gulf war, the Pentagon and state department have made it plain that, apart from the diplomatic fig-leaf of a security council resolution, the UN has no further role in controlling, stopping or extending the operation. That is up to the sole discretion of the United States, whose arms supplied to Siad Barre didn't exactly hinder the clan warfare.

Even the same uncritical "patriotism" of the Gulf war has affected people who should know better. Human Rights Watch director Aryeh Neir immediately sacked Rakiya Omaar, the director of Africa Watch, for dissenting against the US operation. Who did she think she was — she was only a Somali, after all. Why should she know more about the country than Washington?

WILL US president-elect Bill Clinton be an avid supporter of the Provisional IRA, as the British foreign office and Nigel Pratt-Dumpster, the noted psephologist, fear?

Clinton may well have been miffed by the "totally spontaneous decision" of a single civil servant to spend days rifling through old intelligence and passport files in an attempt to dig up dirt on his time in Britain, but his displeasure is most unlikely to result in huge shipments of arms arriving in West Belfast.

The notion seems to have become widely held, not least thanks to some bizarre articles in the *Sunday Times*; in particular via the figure of newly-elected New York congressman Peter King, who seems to be frightening hacks and politicians alike.

True, King openly advocates support for the IRA, is a close friend of Gerry Adams, is often to be found stirring things up in Belfast and gleefully promises to promote the "armed struggle" in Washington. But this is not necessarily to the Provos' advantage, as King's critics have missed one minor point: he is actually a member of George Bush's Republican party and campaigned on a "Clinton is a sleazoid adulterer" ticket. His influence is thus unlikely to be quite as substantial as Dumpster and friends fear.

On the other hand, Democratic congressman Austin Murphy put in an appearance in Belfast to say, quite sensibly, that "... it should not be the business of the US to inject itself into a domestic situation. If I was the president, I would not send a peace envoy unless I had the agreement of all the parties... and that is highly unlikely."

Indeed; but why Whitehall, for example, takes the envoy issue so seriously is hard to understand. In fact Clinton was extremely cautious about making any major commitments to appease the relatively uninfluential Irish-American lobby (which, despite the folklore, supplies virtually no money or weapons to the IRA). Any envoy is likely to make a few convivial visits to Belfast's night life before wishing everyone all the best and retreating to more hopeful climes.

The envoy's appointment will in any case effectively be vetted by the real president, Ms Hilary Clinton. And the IRA's macho image is unlikely to impress her. Sinn Fein's already thin feminist credentials have taken a further battering after its Dublin-based leadership (in between garnering only 1.7 percent of the election vote) appeared to be backing an extremist anti-abortion group called Youth Defence. Sinn Fein's view of women as chattels has always worried feminists here and across the Atlantic. And a likely encounter between Ms Clinton and the steely Irish president Mary Robinson will certainly not be to the IRA's advantage.

Anyway, any American involvement in Ulster will be coordinated by the US consulate in Belfast. Unlike the London and Dublin embassies, with their politically appointed socialite ambassadors, the consulate is staffed by US state department officials and, er, "analysts", none of whom has shown any great sympathy for urban guerilla warfare (unless Oliver North is organising it).

MYSTERY STORY

OVER a drink with his Wapping colleague Garry Bushell last month, *News of the World* TV critic Charles Catchpole happened to mention that he was about to appear on a live Ulster Television chat show called *Kelly*.

The following week, Bushell's TV column in the *Sun* included a sneering review of Catchpole's performance on the programme ("a miracle cure for insomnia"). Alas! Catchpole hadn't yet been on the show and was due to appear in two weeks' time.

Bushell was forced into a rare retraction. "Apologies for that Charles Catchpole review", he wrote the following week. "It must have been a dreadful premonition — like when people have nightmares about air disasters that happen days later."

Well, that is certainly one way of explaining a fabricated review of a programme that hasn't taken place.

There was, however, one curiosity about Bushell's apology. After noting that Catchpole was due to appear on the programme soon, the bearded brute asked whether "Charlie will die on *Kelly* like he did on *New Faces*? I'm sure the boys from East Belfast will let me know."

Who on earth are these sinister-sounding "boys"? They wouldn't be members of the UDA, for instance, would they? Bushell, a noted defender of the UDA during the Stevens inquiry into para-military collusion with the security forces wouldn't be referring to them, would he? Surely not, as they are now a proscribed organisation and the great law and order supporter Bushell would have no truck with them.

There must be an innocent explanation.

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

IF A MAN is aware he is committing a great evil, he will often express public worries about a more trivial matter. Psychiatrists call the phenomenon displacement; and more than likely it explains the behaviour of John Gummer.

Our enduring agriculture minister presides over the most prodigious waste of money western civilisation has ever contrived — the common agricultural policy. Yet he frets about people with the wrong genitalia being ordained as priests.

His resignation from the synod of the Church of England seems a most displaced displacement of priorities.

MOST enjoyable agro-fact of 1992 has been provided by Cavalier Carpets of Blackburn. The firm calculates that it would be possible to carpet the entire European land mass at less cost than the European commission's mind-boggling farm subsidies.

A MINOR celebration has raised the dust in the remoter corridors of the Ministry for Nonsense where the very important Colorado Beetle unit is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Back in 1942 when Liberty ships brought in food and ordnance to bash Hitler, the men from MAFF were alarmed at the threat posed by the Colorado Beetle. The beast looks dangerous; it is obviously an alien; *ergo* it is a threat; *ergo* we can all earn big salaries and expenses fighting the menace.

Can it really be true that more civil servants have lived and died fighting the threat than there have been beetles caught?

THE newly-emboldened deregulation unit at the department of trade and industry is gunning for the harmlessly silly Farrier's Registration Council.

It has decided farriers do not need a four-year apprenticeship to learn horse-shoeing arts, and that four weeks is more like it. Farriers say horse-shoeing is much like surgery, and they do need the long training.

The Farriers Council, set up by a caring Labour government in 1975, represents a long line of continuity in restrictive practices from the horsey trades. (Even the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles describe the farriers' efforts to make horseshoes more complex than they are.)

Meanwhile the council is the only statutory body known to political students to have derived no monopoly rent from its powers. It is either peopled by angels or donkeys.

It was a clever PR wheeze to make out that horseshoes were lucky and criticising farriers unlucky. But in a straight fight between the clueless farriers and the purposeful industry minister Neil Hamilton, who can doubt the result?

THE Country Landowners' Association is much the nicest agricultural interest group scavenging for subsidies, but Old Muck can add a further compliment which will have it ostracised from the militant wing of farming.

The CLA supports the GATT agreement and says the NFU and the French are chumps to think otherwise.

Apart from this outburst, the CLA remains much the best mechanism for lonely rural girls to meet lonely rural boys and to hear the case for markets in farming produce.

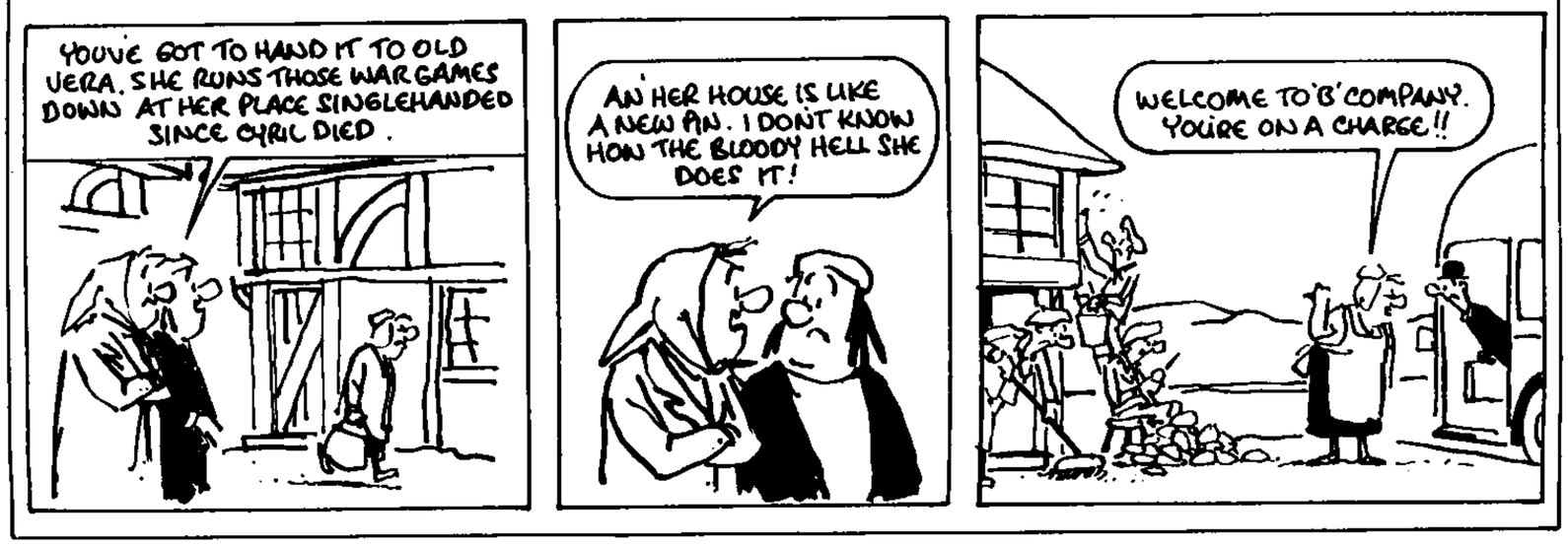
A DANGEROUS subversive spirit is creeping into the Consumers' Association, a normally respectable body that talks primly about safety regulations and the need for competition.

The CA is perhaps the urban equivalent of the CLA, yet in a gesture of defiance to the Edinburgh summit it opened a shop offering groceries at non-EC prices. No single Euro-spokesman was able to knock "The Delors Deli"s offer of groceries at a fraction of their Euro-prices.

A chain of non-CAP food shops would do well throughout the country and guarantee a peerage for the populist Philip Whitehead, CA chairman. Knocking £14 a week off everyone's grocery bill would be quite a reform. Luckily the Labour party supports the EC and CAP, and so we will be saved from the danger of free trade in foodstuffs or clothes or footwear.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


YOUVE GOT TO HAND IT TO OLD VERA. SHE RUNS THOSE WARGAMES DOWN AT HER PLACE SINGLEHANDED SINCE CYRIL DIED.
AN HER HOUSE IS LIKE A NEW PIN. I DONT KNOW HOW THE BLOODY HELL SHE DOES IT!
WELCOME TO 'B' COMPANY. YOURE ON A CHARGE!!

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE POLITICIANS and Eurocrats have departed. Did they deign to notice anything of the finest urban creation of western man as they sped in their limousines to Holyrood Palace from the various pretentious hotels in the city — the absurd neo- baronial Skandia, the insultingly mediocre Sheraton or the solid old North British (now ridiculously and vulgarly renamed the Balmoral for American tourists) — while disrupting the lives of the ordinary citizens of Edinburgh?

The district council certainly hoped they would, for it spent a fortune on doing up the roads, Potemkin-style, so that Our Leaders might pass along. And John Major presumably hoped his guests would be impressed by the capital of Scotland, for he ordered the conversion of Holyrood for his binge at huge cost (when both English Heritage and Historic Scotland are starved of cash). Now it will have to be de-converted, keeping out the public for another few months and giving a PSA workman with a blowlamp another opportunity to do a Windsor at Scotland's royal seat.

Our politicians are not like us; but if the Eurocrats looked out of their bullet-proof windows they might have been saddened by what they saw. Charles McKean's new RIAS guide to Edinburgh prints an engaging conversation between Sir Walter Scott and the mad history painter, Benjamin Robert Haydon: "How d'ye like Edinburgh? It is a dream of great genius, said I. Well done, said Sir Walter." It was. And the dream has been dissipated.

Such things as the new St Andrew's House and the St James's Centre, the ruination of Princes Street and Leith Street, would be offences even in, say, Birmingham. In Edinburgh, they are crimes against civilisation. They were committed over 20 years ago, but the new architecture is little better. Never mind the abovementioned hotels; the much-vaunted Saltire Court beneath the castle is just standard international Post-Modern trash.

But one of the worst scandals is in the very centre of the city, on the Mound. Perhaps the wives and mistresses of the busy Europoliticians out buying souvenirs noticed the big building with a proud Doric portico halfway along Princes Street. Many visitors assume it is the National Gallery of Scotland, but it is not. It was built in the 1820s as the Royal Institution and was designed by Playfair, one of the great architects of the "Athens of the North" (who was also architect of the National Gallery itself next door). It is now occupied by the Royal Scottish Academy.

Under an agreement of 1910, the academy uses it for three months a year for its diploma show. The rest of the time it is rented out to other organisations, or closed. And if the wives and mistresses went inside, they would have found a slum. The magnificent Edwardian interior is a disgrace: the roof leaks in several places, while the wooden piles beneath are rotting. Its condition is so bad that the National Gallery will no longer allow its paintings to be displayed in the building.

A major restoration is needed — and the Scottish office has the money ready — but nothing happens. One of Edinburgh's finest public buildings sits underused and rotting. The Royal Scottish Academy claims that little is wrong and, besides, it is not its job to look after the fabric: that is the responsibility of the National Galleries of Scotland. And they will not do anything until the future of the building is settled.

What the National Galleries want is to share the building with the RSA, allowing it to hold the diploma show as usual while using the interior for major international exhibitions for the rest of the year. Fine, surely? — except that the RSA will not agree to this demotion and wants to hold on to what it has got. So much for art and architecture in Edinburgh.

The Scots much dislike each other — Glasgow against Edinburgh, highland against lowland — but their real hatred is directed at Englishmen. Not any Englishman, mind you: only ones called Julian or Tim who were once directors of Manchester City Art Gallery and who now control the two major museum-empires in the two great cities of Scotland.

In Edinburgh, the director of the National Galleries who wants to get his hands on the other Playfair building is Timothy Clifford. Naturally the good citizens and patriotic artists who comprise the Royal Scottish Academy loathe this snobbish foreign upstart who has clad his warders with Tartan trews, so they will not agree to anything he proposes. In fact, it seems they would rather Playfair's building collapsed than let it become part of Clifford's empire. Such is patriotism. "Rise up and be a nation again!" read the car-stickers. But serious nations also cherish their monuments.

Meanwhile, Pilate-like, the secretary of state for Scotland washes his hands of responsibility until the two organisations can reach agreement on how Edinburgh's prime architectural asset might be used for the benefit of the city. That looks like never. Perhaps Edinburgh really is as European as the Scots fondly suppose in that it is the European community in microcosm: a model of disagreement, jealousy, hatreds and self-interest. Turn in your grave and despair, Sir Walter!

'Piloti'

Sally Deedes

THE precedent set by the court victory of Three Arrows, Britain's biggest accident car hire firm, over insurers Eagle Star and Commercial Union, would appear not to have been taken to heart by the whole insurance industry.

Eye readers will recall the case at Bury county court: the two insurers refused to pay car hire charges to Three Arrows, even though they had already admitted accident liability, claiming that Three Arrows had maintained illegal contracts. The judge, Elizabeth Steel, found the claims were legitimate since hiring a replacement vehicle restored an innocent motor accident victim to the same position he or she was in before the accident.

Following my running of the story, Mr Ron Shaw of Cambridge wrote to tell me of his experience in trying to get car hire compensation. He was the innocent victim of an accident when his car was hit by a driver who admitted to police that he had not seen Mr Shaw's car and was entirely to blame.

Mr Shaw, who lives in a small village outside Cambridge without easy access to public transport, had an uninsured loss policy with Direct Line Insurance. At the time of the accident he was out of work and needed a car to attend interviews. He therefore hired a vehicle; and four days later received "Notes of guidance on car hire", listing various conditions. The hire car had to be the same size and engine capacity as the one it was replacing; the insurance company wouldn't reimburse hire charges of £500 if the original car was only worth £600. And the notes added that the claimant "must limit the claim to the minimum hire period possible".

With the strictures ringing in his ears, and the fact that he had secured a job within 10 days, Mr Shaw returned the hire car and for the next four weeks — while his car was being mended — begged lifts where possible or used the scant public transport.

In settling the matter some weeks later, Churchill Insurance (for the other side) wrote to Direct Line: "We are unable to agree the claim for loss of use as presented, noting that your client hired a vehicle for one week and was thereafter able to use public transport to conduct his affairs." Direct Line told Mr Shaw: "Any injured party has a common law duty to mitigate his or her losses and we suspect that it is on this basis that Churchill dispute your claim."

As Mr Shaw told me: "I obviously understand that I should not exaggerate my claim for a car, but the Three Arrows case found that hiring a vehicle in these circumstances does not require a special reason."

Three Arrows has since found itself in court on 21 similar hearings, all of which it has won. On this basis the firm asked for 68 other cases to be struck out, whereupon the court was inundated with leading silks representing the various insurance companies. The judge who had previously found in favour of Three Arrows adjourned the hearing on the assurance of counsel for Eagle Star that the firm would be appealing.

The period in which an appeal could be lodged has now passed. As Chris Norman, managing director of Salford-based Three Arrows, said: "Perhaps if insurance companies took their responsibility to clients seriously they would recognise that they are trying to put Three Arrows and other companies in the accident-related car hire sector out of business, the result of which would be to further disadvantage the very people they *claim* to help."

For those in the same position as Mr Shaw, Three Arrows can be contacted at Arlington House, Bloom Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, M3 6AJ.

LUVVIES

"If I could change it I would. Fame doesn't help me in my work."

KEVIN COSTNER
Daily Mirror

"I sometimes go into the cameras in the morning very quietly and say, 'Hello camera'. I talk right into the lens.

"I want to like the camera and I want the camera to like me. It is very important to get to know it and respect it and have some fun with it."

ANTHONY HOPKINS
South Wales Echo

Submitted by E. Strobes, G. Downey.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for contributions.

Bankers

IN THE kerfuffle over extortionate bank charges, no one has yet mentioned the phenomenon of "the manager's mark-up" — a disgraceful rip-off practised in high street banks.

Following public outcry over the banks' apparent ability to charge a percentage rate plucked from the air, two cashiers have rung me, independently, to explain how the system works.

When you open a bank account a "charges card" is opened in your name and you are told that interest which is charged on a quarterly basis is worked out on a computer which can never make mistakes.

What you are *not* told is the mark-up that takes place every quarter when managers, mindful of how large or small is the deficit the bank has to make up, go through individual charge cards adding or subtracting interest charges as they see fit.

Comments such as "they can afford it" or "do they make a fuss when they come into the bank?" are commonplace (it apparently pays to shout and thump about it when you've got a problem, rather than to be too polite).

Such arbitrary addition and subtraction is able to be applied since "no one is able to work out their own interest in the first place, what with fluctuating bank rates et al". And when on the very rare occasion someone is beady-eyed enough to notice the kick-up in the account, the bank apologises, saying that the whole thing is automatic and that "you are an anomaly".

Nice to know banks haven't lost their personal touch after all.

HOW long does it take to clear a cheque?

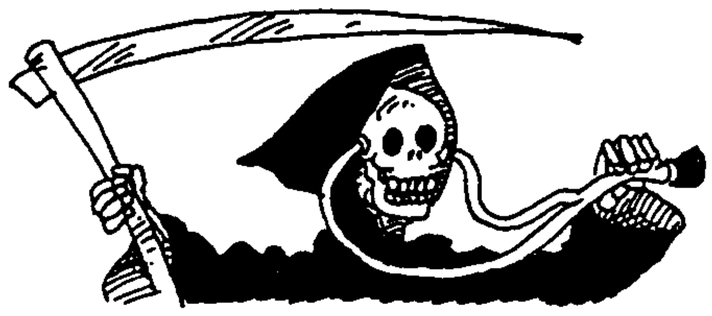
The general response would be three working days; but when Richard Hillier of Cambridge visited his Barclays a month ago he was told "four and a half working days" and that this had always been the case.

When making a transfer a week later, he was then told "five days". The teller explained that although funds have cleared after three days, there is a possibility that the cheque might have to be "uncleared" if the teller has made a mistake within the next one and a half days, although you would earn interest as if it had been cleared in three days.

Mr Hellier is self-employed and cash flow is thus of paramount importance to him. It would appear the system penalises the small businessman or woman, who presumably must organise for a short-term overdraft to ensure they can pay creditors effectively.

A quick ring around the banks revealed a strange discrepancy: Barclays, four to five days; Nat West, three and a half days, "no strings"; Lloyds three working days (if you pay your cheque in on, say, Tuesday at 3.30 you can draw on funds on Friday); TSB, three clear days).

Mr Hellier is mystified. As he says, in these days of high speed banking and electronic fund transfer, when a complete currency can be destroyed in a day, how can it still take so long to clear a cheque?



DOING THE ROUNDS

HEALTH secretary Virginia Bottomley made a brief but fragrant appearance at last month's Hospital Doctor of the Year award at London's Café Royal.

Professing her desire to give the award to "a woman or a junior", she only agreed to appear after assurances that the winner was not from a London teaching hospital. Bestowing such an honour on someone shortly to face the Tomlinson axe would be, as she put it, "frightfully embarrassing".

● HOW MUCH of the £130 million saved by Tomlinson's hospital closures will survive Norman Lamont's sundries bill and filter through to **London** GPs is a matter for debate. But the net result of any future revitalisation of inner-city practices will be that more patients will be seen by GPs and more will be referred to London hospitals — if any still exist.

Tomlinson-style cuts are set to be inflicted on all big cities. **South Birmingham health authority** is already planning to close the **Birmingham Accident Hospital** and the **Royal Orthopaedic** hospital to save £7.5 million and lose 600 jobs.

● THE FUTURE of **Westminster and Chelsea hospital** is in doubt before it is even completed. Already £100 million over-budget, the "WC" will cost more than £300,000 a bed because of falling land prices, major design changes and a 25- week delay. Three hundred other schemes in the **North West Thames** region have been shelved to finance the venture, and **Wellhouse** and **Barnet** trusts face further cuts (see *Eyes passim*).

● **WELSH** office health minister Gwilym Jones has a novel solution to whistle-blowing in cash-strapped **South Glamorgan**: installing his constituency secretary, Caroline Jones, as a member of the regional health authority.

Mrs Jones, who is happily married to the minister's election agent, David, will be joining Janet Sainsbury, wife of Cardiff city council's Tory leader Jeff, at SGRHA headquarters. Curiously Gwilym, David and Jeff are all members of the **Wenallt masonic lodge,** and David and Jeff are senior partners in the same Cardiff accountancy practice Pannell Kerr Foster.

SGRHA, meanwhile, may soon need some imaginative accounting. Faced with a £10 million overspend, it instigated widespread cuts and closures and then suspended the unit general manager of the **Cardiff Group** of hospitals, Alan Trew, after he publicly announced that patients were suffering. Mr Trew was criticised by SGRHA chairman Ian Grist for not moving fast enough to affect redundancies. Mr Grist is also a former Cardiff Central Tory MP.

● **WARRINGTON General Hospital Trust** will soon have a new chief executive, and novice Chris Butler is emerging as hot favourite.

The previous incumbent, Mike Shannon, was given generous redundancy after the hospital ran up huge debts and has thus far kept quiet about his departure. His logical successor, the vastly experienced Eric Hodgson, has been overlooked by the NHS executive, despite having full backing of the consultants' committee. The vastly inexperienced Mr Butler is also the recently ousted Tory MP for **Warrington South.**

● MRS BOTTOMLEY needs all the help she can get as the failure of the government's reforms to address NHS under-funding becomes more apparent.

With four months of the financial year to go, many district health authority "purchasers" have run out of money, leaving trust and non-trust "providers" to face the same crippling financial difficulties as before the reforms. The only "reform" has been the increasing emergence of two-tier provisions favouring fund-holding GPs. **Guildford's Royal Surrey County Hospital Trust**, faced with a £750,000 debt, has cancelled all routine NHS operations except those on patients of fund-holding GPs.

Other hospitals that are closing wards, laying off staff and stopping elective surgery on all but fund-holders' patients include: **Sandwell District General Hospital** in the **West Midlands**; **Norfolk and Norwich** and **West Norwich** hospitals (*Eye* 808); the **Royal United Hospital Trust** in **Bath** (which has closed 24 beds despite a £650,000 DHA bail-out); **Mid-Essex Hospital Services Trust** in **Chelmsford**; **Basildon and Thurrock Hospitals Trust** (£500,000 over-spent); **St Peters Hospital** in **Chertsey**; **Pontefract General Infirmary** in **West Yorkshire**; **Northwick Park Hospital** in **Middlesex**; **St Albans City Hospital** in **Herts**; **Queen Elizabeth II Hospital** in **Welwyn Garden City**; **South Tees DGH** in **Cleveland**; **Wycombe General Hospital**; **Kettering General Hospital**; **Stoke Mandeville Hospital** in **Bucks** (£1 million overspent, 70 jobs and 51 beds to go); and **Central Middlesex Hospital** in **London** (£1.6 million in debt and offering 120 voluntary redundancies).

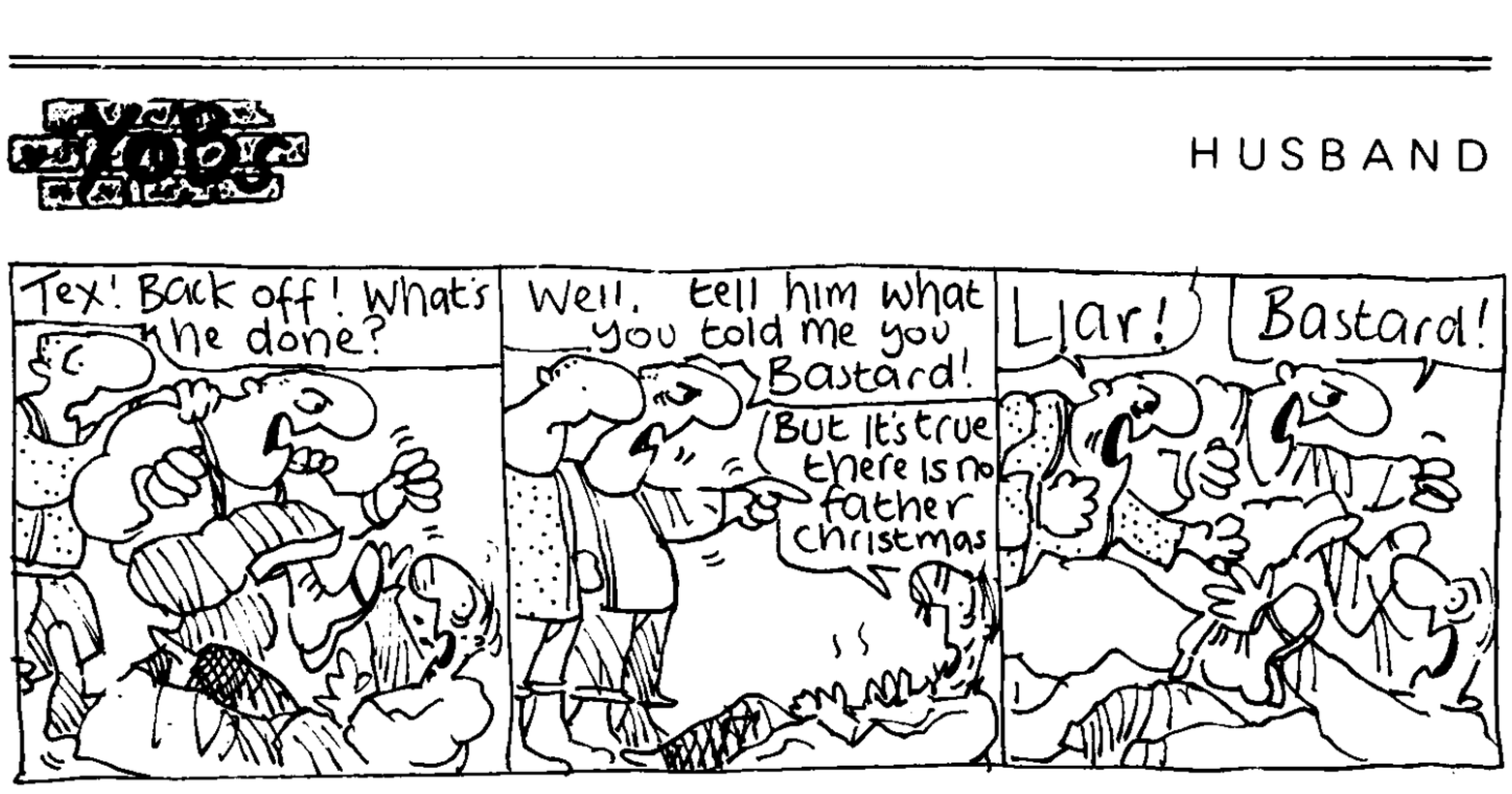
● FURTHER capitulation has emerged at **Guy's Flagship NHS Trust**, where one surgeon insists that "FHGP" is written next to *F*und-*H*olding *GP*s' patients on his operating list. This enables him to provide a personal service for the select few while leaving his less qualified juniors to chop up non-fundholders' patients.

● THE decline in popularity of two-tier general practice as a career (*Eye* 808) is matched only by that of dentistry, which boasts a 70 percent decrease in university applications over the last five years, with only 1.8 candidates contesting each place. Small comfort for the 20 percent of the UK population who already miss out on dental care.

● **LONDON'S Tooting Hospital** is undergoing transformation from a psychiatric hospital to a Sainsbury's. Two wards and the acute emergency unit have remained open during the building work, and any patient remaining stationary for too long becomes covered in a layer of brick dust.

● **WESSEX Regional Health Authority** has decided not to take legal action against Arthur Anderson and IBM for selling it a useless computer system costing £43 million (*Eye* 804). The reason? It doesn't have enough money.

M.D.



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BIRMINGHAM

THE empire of would-be Birmingham media baron, Labour councillor Bryan Bird, has crashed around his ears taking several million pounds of poll taxpayers' money with it.

Bird is determined to become council leader *when the ageing Sir* "Dick" Knowles steps down, and he has built a huge public relations department with a £2.2 million budget, effectively controlled by his circumferentially-challenged self.

It included £707,000 a year for the city's free "newspaper" *Birmingham Voice*, which started last May and was supposed to reach every one of the city's 400,000 homes. The *Voice* made Bird doubly gleeful because, besides carrying hundreds of pictures of him, it was financed by pulling advertising from the *Birmingham Post & Mail*, whose occasional pisspoor stories knocking the city council upset the over-sensitive, Maxwell-sized councillor.

Now the city has learnt that the company awarded the £707,000 contract, Capita plc, has sold them rather short. Capita had promised 97 per cent minimum distribution, but managed a maximum 62 per cent with the average much less than that. Council chief executive Roger Taylor has had the embarrassment of trying to explain why he and colleagues never asked for the circulation certification demanded by the contract — and why Capita was paid regardless.

What he has not explained is where the copies destined for the 152,000 homes who received none of the 16 issues — about 2.4 million copies altogether — ended up. No one even knows if they were printed. And, despite a long and secret report detailing the finances of *Birmingham Voice*, obtained by the *Eye*, he has also failed to account for the cash raised in advertising, mainly from West Midlands Travel.

Even more embarrassingly, the city council has gone crawling back to the *Post & Mail*, asking it to take over from Capita to print and produce *Birmingham Voice* — with fewer pictures of Bird. Chris Oakley, Branson lookalike and the *P&M*'s editor-in-chief, has been courting the city for months, giving his supine municipal hacks David Bell and Phil Smith strict orders not to upset the councillors by printing the truth about of their sordid dealings. That has not pleased company chairman Sir Norman Fowler, who delights in knocking the Labour city council.

But the deal has paid off. Bird has had to eat humble pie. No one has been forced into embarrassing revelations about who was to blame for the *Voice* debacle. And the Labour authority continues to do what it does best: pouring poll taxpayers' money down the drain.

SHEFFIELD

AS PREDICTED in the *Eye*, Sheffield, Britain's steal (*sic*) city, will grind to a halt for the next few decades while councillors pay off multi-million pound debts incurred by the ridiculous World Student Games.

While 2,000 teaching jobs are to go, average primary school classes will rise from 28 pupils to 39; three homes for the elderly will close; 18 libraries are to be axed and one sports centre will shut down as councillors strive to reduce public spending by £20 million. Operating losses on the games were only slightly higher at £25 million.

With the city crumbling around her, Sheffield chief executive Pamela Gordon has been spending a lot of time trying to root out the town hall mole who leaked details of the games fiasco to Lord Gnome.

Meanwhile council finance officers have had little trouble finding spare change to throw at retiring housing boss Ray Gridley, who had been deliberately moved from the relatively safe housing seat to run the games so he could take the rap when the event flopped. Once the games' £25 million losses were publicly revealed, Gridley took early retirement and a very sporting £250,000 golden handshake.

PETERBOROUGH

PETERBOROUGH Conservative leader Neville Sanders is a making a late bid to become Britain's looniest councillor to judge by his recent communication with local pensioners.

Sanders was so incensed by an innocent request from a Mrs Rosemary Watson of the Norfolk & Norwich Pensioners' Association (she had the temerity to ask him to speak to their members) that he wrote back accusing her of "exploiting pensioners for socialist political purpose". His letter continued: "You are a wicked woman. I would suggest you seek immediate treatment before your evil ways destroy you within."

Clearly two members short of the full committee meeting, Sanders went on: "Mindful of your remarkable propensity for terminological inexactitude, please do not correspond with me until you have discussed the origin and release of verity with your temporal tutor. May God forgive you."

When Jack Thain, general secretary of the national pensioners' group, then wrote to Mr Sanders, he also got a flea in his ear. "I return your letter in order that you may observe the need for learning the first meaning of 'truth' then seek forgiveness," barked Sanders. A subsequent, er, epistle, continued: "As you sow so will you reap, liberal use of left wing expressions will surely brand you likewise. If you are intelligent too perhaps I might convert you to the path of political righteousness after all..." and so on, ad nauseam.

East Anglian pensioners have now complained about Coun Sanders to the ombudsman. Although there is no legislation banning loonies from serving on councils, the pensioners feel he may have abused his position by writing such drivel on council-headed notepaper.

MANCHESTER

THE FUTURE of the Hulme estate, one of the worst slums in Britain, continues to haunt Manchester city council.

Two years ago Hulme won £37 million from the government's City Challenge scheme to regenerate the area. To date only one-fifth has been handed over and there is no guarantee that the rest of the money will be forthcoming. City Challenge was also supposed to attract £600 million worth of private investment. So far two projects have been unveiled — a pub and a new social security block.

Hulme's future remains in the hands of a secretive group, Hulme Regeneration Ltd, with representatives drawn from the property company AMEC, housing associations, Hulme tenants and the council benches. All meetings are held *in camera* and members are sworn to secrecy. So much for public consultation.

Planners seem determined to make the same mistakes all over again. Twenty five years ago the old back-to-backs were demolished when Hulme was chosen by councillors as a test-case for their bizarre social experiments — a community totally dependent on the council with houses, roads, shops, schools and inhabitants provided by the town hall.

Equally fatuous plans have now been drawn up for the area involving obligatory Metrolink trams, a grass amphitheatre and a "happenings" area, though what is supposed to be happening is not revealed. As with all grandiose (but unbuilt) Manchester developments in recent years, the plans promise ludicrous piazzas and pavement cafes, even though no one in Manchester has ever wanted to sit al fresco with a capuccino and croissant, even in summer and especially not in Hulme. Floodlit dog-fighting pits and all-weather joyriding arenas might be more fitting.

Hulme, until recently the second largest council estate in Europe, is now nearly deserted. Yet before they were uprooted tenants had voted for the estate to be refurbished rather than demolished. By then Hulme's inhabitants were no longer families living below the poverty line but wealthy students and eccentric artists slumming it for a few years.

As usual Manchester city council listened and than ignored its findings. So the decrepit, deck-access rabbit hutches that covered the estate are being bulldozed along with the infamous crescents — massive concrete blocks fashioned like a nightmare version of Georgian Bath and sarcastically named after great architects — John Nash, Charles Barry et al.

Letters

Private Eye

Dare wins?

Sir,

Your issue of 4 December contained an article which implied that I ignored protests from Christians about the appearance of the "Christ" puppet on SPITTING IMAGE, *but that as soon as Muslims complained I crapped myself and withdrew the latex Lord.*

The truth is that it came to pass that Central TV spake unto me saying: "Think most carefully before inviting the Saviour to make a second coming, for many people are mightily cheesed off". It was only after my decision to give the puppet a rest for a while that I was informed by someone at the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *that Muslims had been complaining too (since Christ is also a prophet of Islam). The* TELEGRAPH *hack decided that a tale about* SPITTING IMAGE *being more scared of Muslims than Christians could be The Greatest Story Ever Made Up.*

Incidentally, the Muslim in question (there was just the one) phoned me after the article. He complained that thousands of Christians can protest and no one bats an eyelid, but a Muslim complains, and he's branded a homicidal fanatic. We both wrote to the TELEGRAPH *about the way the story had been hyped.*

Here endeth the first lesson: don't believe everything you read in the papers: especially in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH.

Yours faithfully,
BILL DARE,

Producer, Spitting Image, London E1.

Brookeballs?

Sir,

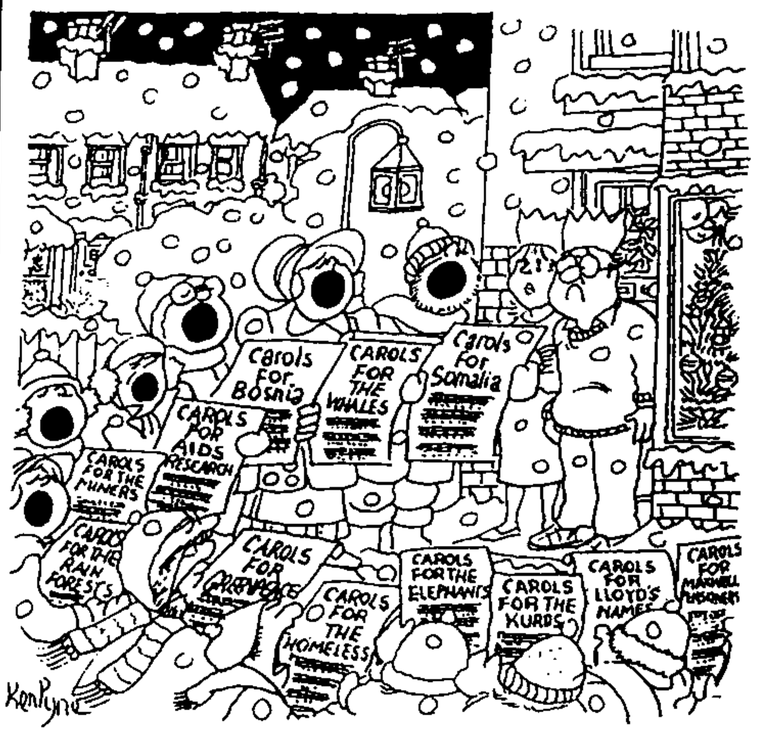
Having endured over the last few years in Ulster, Peter Brooke's governorship of the natives of one of the remaining colonies, I would admit that he always reminded me of one of the minor characters from a P.G. Wodehouse novel in his attitude and demeanour.

I therefore find it impossible to believe that he uttered the quotation "credited" to him in Colemanballs (808) — "Open up THAT THERE (sic) Pandora's Box and there's no telling what Trojan Horses might come out of it".

Might I suggest to your contributor, Ms McLeod, that "Clementine" was merely quoting the originator of the quotation, Ernest Bevin, who most certainly possessed the necessary working-class credentials?

Sincerely,
HARRY IRWIN,

Belfast.



Heartfelt thanks

Sir,

I see that you are having another swipe at Bristol Royal Infirmary's "precarious" paediatric cardiac surgery unit. Exactly what your objections to this unit are escape me, but I feel moved to write in its defence.

Our son, born with Down's Syndrome and congenital heart disease, was operated on at BRI last November to repair his hole in the heart. Every member of the staff showed an unswerving dedication to all aspects of Joseph's operation, including helping us, his family, through the most traumatic experience we have ever known.

I have heard it suggested that some hospitals are not prepared to carry out such an operation if the child concerned has Down's Syndrome, as the risk of failure is too high. (This may be only unfounded rumour, so is likely to appear as fact in your next issue, no doubt.) Since the majority of children with Down's Syndrome have such a heart defect with associated operative risk, those hospitals that are prepared to carry out the operation may well appear way down the list in a league table of success v. failure. However, what is the true story behind the bald statistics?

Leave BRI, or at least the cardiac unit, alone. Without it and all its staff, our son would be ill and dying. He is fit and healthy only because of them.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY DOYLE,

Kingswear, Dartmouth.

"Hi honey, I'm ho-ho-ho-home!"

Lookalike

Vasiljevic

Merton

Sir,

Looking through the weekend papers I could not help noticing the similarity between TV's Paul Merton and Jedzimir Vasiljevic, the mysterious Serbian banker who is financing Bobby Fischer's comeback. Both seem to wear white ties and ugly iridescent jackets. Could their tailors by any chance be related?

Yours sincerely,
ARTHUR FINDLAY,

London SW6.

Parish counsel

Sir,

Re Bart's. If "Saudi Arabian purchasers are waiting in the wings to buy the Bart's Smithfield site" ("A premedicated crime?" EYE *807), do they know that the hospital is uniquely a Church of England parish (founded by Letters Patent of Henry VIII, 1546)?*

The ancient parish church of St Bartholomew the Less, within the hospital grounds, is not a hospital chapel, therefore it does not and cannot belong to the NHS and is not theirs to dispose of. As such, I imagine that this could be a stumbling-block to any non-Christian purchase of the site.

Do you think they should be told?

Yours faithfully,
Rev. MICHAEL WHAWELL,

Vicar, St Bartholomew the Less & Hospitaller, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London EC1.

On the Mantel piece...

Sir,

We would like to point out to your readers that as judges for the SUNDAY EXPRESS *Book of the Year award — won by Hilary Mantel — our recollection of the judging is different from the one you printed.*

The newspaper's editor, Eve Pollard, did not exercise more influence than the rest of us. Nor did she have the casting vote as you wrote. After prolonged deliberation that privilege went to Nanette Newman.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW NEWMAN, NANETTE NEWMAN, SHERIDAN MORLEY,

Chelsea Harbour.

(Rat) poison pens

Sir,

Thank you, thank you, thank you. For some time now I've eagerly scoured the EYE*'s literary review page in the vain hope that Bookworm would do a hatchet job on one of my books. Disappointed so often I consoled myself with the thought that your magazine wasn't the type to jump on the literary establishment's usual "knock Herbert" bandwagon. More ego-deflatingly, I also decided I really wasn't important enough to gain your attention.*

Happy days — at last you've done a number on me! Forgivably, our friend (our mutual friend, I think) Bookworm didn't get everything right. He said my first novel, THE RATS, *was smartly followed by its sequel,* LAIR*: well yes, but it was five years later, so perhaps not quite so smartly. His second assertion was that my publisher has a say in what I write. Afraid not — ketchup, gnawings, pustulences, etc, are up to me and only occasionally nowadays do I go to those extremes (old age has softened me, it seems). He falls into the establishment trap, you see, of assuming I only write about rats, blood and gore which, although not quite so forgivable, is at least understandable — the bugger keeps selling year after year. But I have attempted variations in style and content with* FLUKE, SHRINE, MAGIC COTTAGE, HAUNTED, *all of which have sold as well, if not better than, the ratty stories.*

Wrong again — and this is a little more serious and just a bit dangerous — when Bookworm tells us PORTENT *is rascist [sic] and bigoted. Surprising, too, to find the* EYE *taking the politically correct line. Every villain I've used in the past 15 books has been white, but this time I decided to ring the changes. Does saying a black person can be evil make the book rascist? If it does, then we're all in trouble. My description is of a particular fictitious monster — should I have toned it down because she's black? No, I refuse to discriminate. And she is head of an almost voodoo sect — tradition renders it difficult to make her henchmen white. The mugger was black to give relevance to a psychic link between hero and villain. (Dare I suggest this in such a politically correct climate? Okay, I dare: ask any inner-city constable the ratio of black muggers to white and the answer might favour my use of a black mugger.)*

Unfortunately, the implication is that as the author I'm a rascist bigot, a nasty charge that forces me to defend myself. Admittedly it doesn't cost much, but I pay for an African boy's schooling through the usual charity channels; privately I'm arranging to put his older brother through college. Also I've entered into a deal to work on a project with Lenny Henry and, as you know, he's quite dark. Oddly, the colour of his skin hasn't come under discussion which, if I am as you say, is a bit remiss of me. Small examples, I know, but others would take up too much space (besides, how far should I go to appease the thought police?)

Yours faithfully,
JAMES HERBERT,

Hodder & Stoughton, London WC1.

Grouch

Sir,

Grovel's comments about increased remuneration for Groucho Club directors in the issue of 20 November is indeed true, but fails to include certain pertinent details. (How unlike your columnists to gloss over the facts!)

Mary-Lou Sturridge was appointed an executive director at the beginning of our financial year. The two other executive directors received but modest increases. None of our esteemed non-executive directors receive a salary. Surely a case of double checking rather than doubles all round!

Yours faithfully,
LIAM CARSON,

General Manager, The Groucho Club, London W1.

Lookalike

Wolf

Deayton

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between the esteemed television personality Wolf from ITV's GLADIATORS *and the TV quiz person Angus Deayton?*

Are they by any chance related?

Yours sincerely,
RUSSELL WEIGHTON,

London E9.

Mann bites back

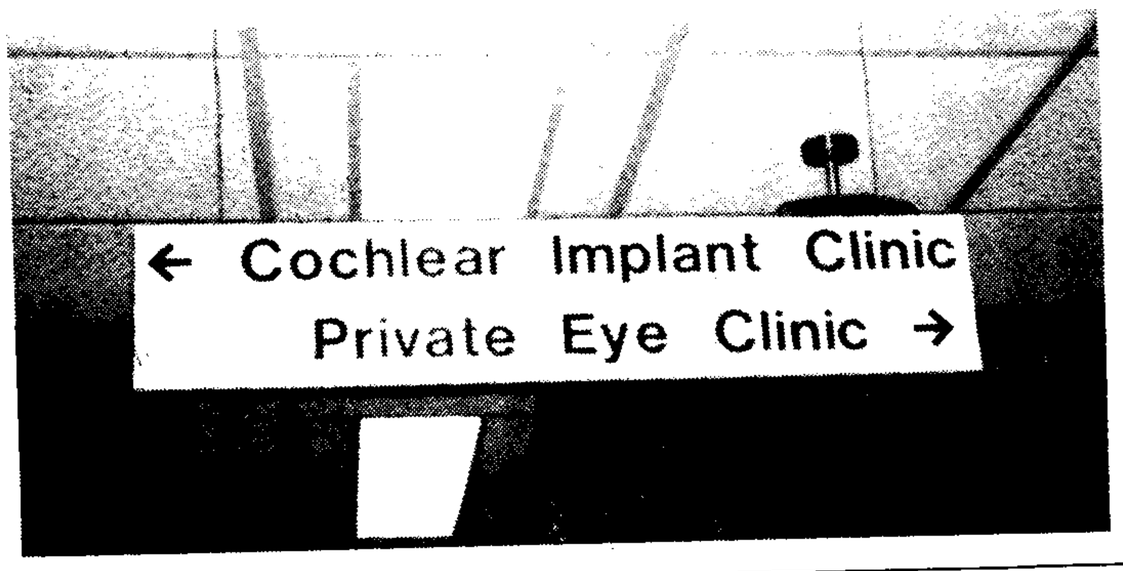
Sir,

On 19 November you mistakenly said that I was suspended following an incident at Sky. This is completely untrue.

It being the season of goodwill, I shall keep Thue, Gwabbit and Wun tethered over this one... at least until I can persuade the treasury to contribute to my legal costs.

Yours etc,
CHRIS MANN,

Sky News, Isleworth, Mddx.



I-SPY

Melbourne

Submitted by L. Shipgood. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Three bridges too far?

Sir,

I was interested to read in your last edition about BR's duplicity re the Gatwick Express and its pathetic attempts to pretend that no other trains stop at Gatwick. Not only do unwary travellers have to pay more, but if they arrive at Gatwick on a train from the South Coast and are told that their train is only going so far as Clapham Junction, they may transfer to a Gatwick Express train and have to pay again.

By the way, you do not have to book to Three Bridges to avoid this but can book to Gatwick (emphasising not Gatwick Express) and if you use your network card the fare should only be about £4, half the price of the Gatwick Express.

I must say that the BR staff I have spoken to about this have been suitably embarrassed and I trust that more publicity will put an end to this iniquitous practice.

Yours,
MICHAEL BUCKLAND,

London NW5.

Bad Gus leak

Sir,

In your 20 November edition you stated that Scottish Television's managing director Gus Macdonald has a salary of £234,500 per annum. Your facts are wrong. This total, as clearly stated in our accounts, refers to his predecessor and included an ex-gratia one-off payment of £100,000 for 25 years service as chief executive.

Your suggestion that Gus Macdonald will profit from buying a company-owned house is also wrong. He bought his flat from Scottish Television soon after moving to Glasgow in 1986.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON FORREST,

Controller of Corporate Affairs, Scottish Television, Glasgow.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I love my constituency... I love going to bring and buy sales or just opening or closing something."
VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY, BBC1
(Matthew Hargreaves)

"He [Cuantacosta] had no choice but to make a needless challenge."
PAUL ELLIOTT, Channel 4
(Malcolm Eldridge)

"The lights went up and there I was standing flat on my face."
JASON DONOVAN, BBC1
(Laurence Grissell)

"Now this next question has absolutely nothing to do with either music or sport... at what ground did Geoffrey Boycott hit his hundredth 100?"
Classic FM
(T.A. Dallman)

Reporter: *Where did the fire start?*
HRH Duke of York: *It started in the Private Chapel.*
Reporter: *What's that called?*
HRH Duke of York: *The Private Chapel.*
ITN
(Daniel Finkletaub)

Window pain

Sir,

I read Jeff Curtis's letter regarding UPVC windows with dismay (EYE *807).*

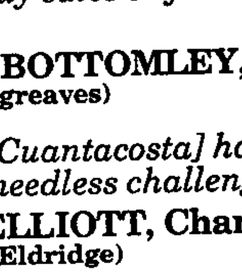
To suggest that an already weak and ineffectual conservation lobby, to be further weakened, is good news for the common man is ridiculous. Mr Curtis must go round with his eyes half closed or have some vested interest in UPVC windows, to fail to see that conservationists are having little impact in halting a "plastic window epidemic".

Plastic windows can hardly claim to be superior, with crude elements like "stick on tape" that pose as glazing bars! These windows are broadly unproven technology. The case for wood can be found in 200-year-old elegant Georgian sashes, that are still in sound condition.

It is a fair bet that by the turn of the century, there will be few Victorian villas or any other pre-war house, that has not lost its "character" due to this replacement window mania, hence the level of the problem.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN TROTH,

Birmingham.



Letter from **India**

from Our Own Correspondent

WHILE Hindu and Muslim mobs rioted — around 900 people died, 3,000 were injured and property worth millions was destroyed — the government of Narashima Rao remained paralysed.

Trouble flared following the demolition by Hindu fundamentalists of the mosque in Ayodhya, north India. So much for our secular unity...

Hindus, led by the fundamentalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and its militants, have long agitated to build a temple in place of the mosque to honour their god, Ram. Promising to obey court orders prohibiting construction and preserving the mosque, BJP leaders assured Rao that around 300,000 Hindu fanatics would merely perform symbolic prayers at the site on 6 December.

Rao ignored a contingency plan approved by his cabinet to dismiss the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh and take over the site. He also glossed over intelligence reports predicting damage to the mosque, relying instead on the BJP promises. Within an hour of arriving at the site, thousands broke through the flimsy police barriers and in a frenzy levelled the mosque, reducing Rao's government to dazed incredulity.

Surrounded by ministers who want him out, Rao chaired crisis cabinets which became forums for scoring points rather than coping with the storm. Arjun Singh, human resource development minister, and Sharad Pawar, defence minister, both PMs-in-waiting, thought this the moment to rally MPs to their cause.

The wilier Singh, who says little but plots plenty, seemed to be on the ascendent, squeezing Rao into taking counter productive steps. It was reportedly at his behest that Rao ordered the arrest of BJP and Hindu militant leaders, so making them martyrs and increasing their belligerence.

Rao then proscribed communal organisations, especially Hindu ones, but with no way of imposing his ban. Three north Indian states are ruled by sympathetic BJP governments who will openly defy central authority, and security forces are so stretched "maintaining" order they cannot be spared.

Then, in a bid to placate world Muslim opinion, Rao promised to rebuild the mosque, not realising it would prove impossible. Hindu zealots had already put up a makeshift temple on the site, and any attempt to move it will lead to more violence. Conversely, not to rebuild the mosque will offend 110 million Muslims.

In fact there was little else Rao could have done in the absence of a unified government. By not taking firm action he would have been deemed weak; by taking firm action he runs the risk of diminishing his standing and hastening calls for his resignation — which is what wolves in his party want.

In the past three years controversy over a once insignificant mosque has been responsible for the dismissal of two governments, the spreading of communal violence, the spawning of outrage and insecurity among Muslims and the sweeping to power of the BJP on a call for Hindu hegemony.

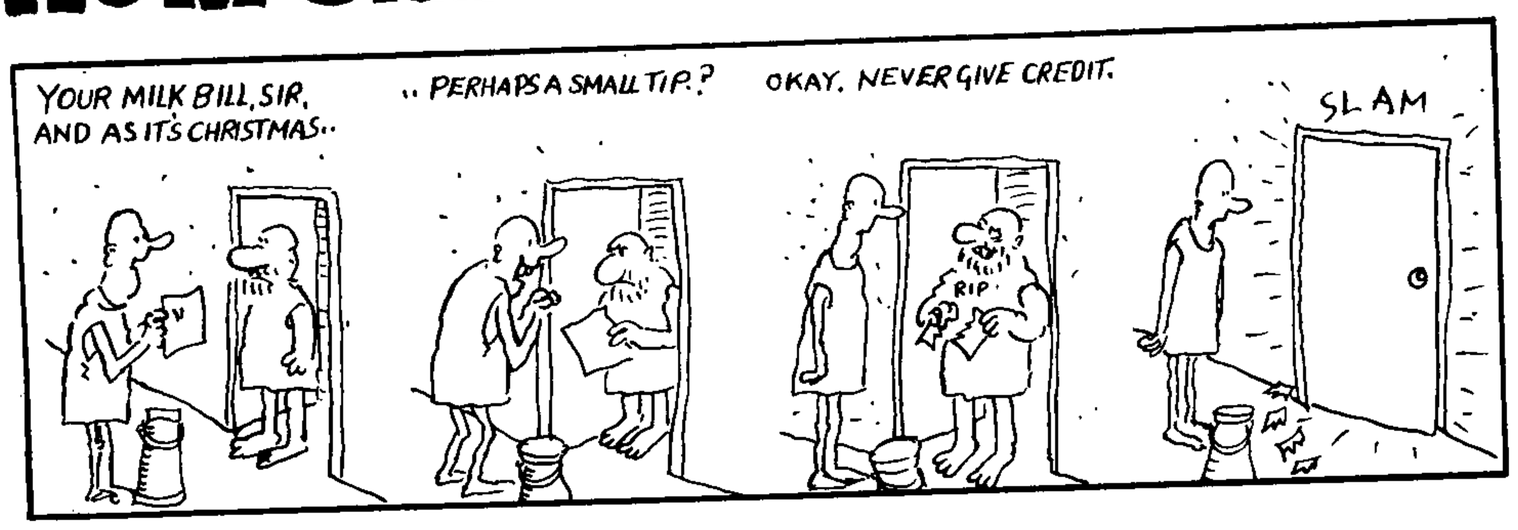
By promoting the temple's construction, the BJP devilishly mixed religion and politics and appealed to 700 million Hindus to assert themselves, principally by demolishing a mosque they claimed was built on the ruins of a Ram temple. This paid rich dividends when 118 BJP MPs were elected to parliament and four state governments in 1989.

It was Indira Gandhi who perfected the mix of religion and politics in our allegedly secular state. She nurtured Sikh fundamentalism to garner majority Hindu support, but was unable to contain it and was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. Her son, Rajiv, cleverly used his mother's murder and demands for a separate Sikh state to woo Hindu votes and win the largest majority of any Indian prime minister.

But facing defeat in 1989, he tried to win Hindu votes again by laying the foundations for the temple. In so doing he resurrected a volatile issue that has been hijacked by the fundamentalists, has shattered India's peace and will continue to do so for a long time to come.

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

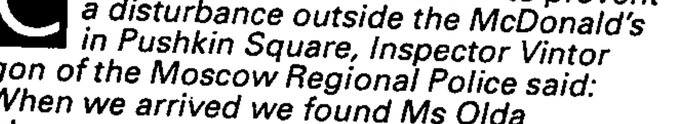


TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

DURING his talk to the Alexandra Park Action Group on Musical Memories, the writer and critic Mr Felix Aprahamian revealed that the world-famous violinist Nigel Kennedy was conceived in the front room of Mr Aprahamian's Muswell Hill house and that on one of his rare visits to London the composer Francis Poulenc urinated against the tree growing outside that house.

INTERVIEWED soon after his release, Divisional Telephone Engineer Mr Shoaib Ahmad said: "I was having my lunch in the Divisional Office when four armed men arrived in a yellow cab. When I hesitated to accompany them, they lifted me above their heads and carried me through my astonished staff to the cab. Then we drove to the banks of the River Tadoon and I was rowed across to Bath Island. As I stepped ashore I was greeted by a large man with a glass of champagne in his hand who turned out to be Mr Aamur Ali Shah, Special Assistant to the Minister of Police. The Special Assistant apologised for the way I had been brought to his official residence but his telephone had not been working for three days and his wife was furious about it. When I refused to repair the telephone, the Special Assistant said that he would keep me on Bath Island forever unless I repaired it at once. 'It is no good complaining to the people who brought you here. They are illiterates and do as they are told,' he said — so I repaired his telephone.



Bert Kitchen

"SOME of us had come from as far afield as Scotland to be present at Mr Lincoln's seance," said Mrs Betty Allen, spokeswoman for the Noah's Ark Society. "Mr Lincoln has a tremendous reputation as a physical medium. We all took off our shoes and in next to no time a luminous octopus began to float in the air. Then a spirit trumpet sounded. But then the lights went on and Mr Lincoln was revealed standing in the middle of the room blowing a toy trumpet. We were devastated. But then Mr Lincoln said: 'Daniel has done it. It is Daniel's fault.' Then he explained that it was Daniel who had picked up the trumpet and put it in his, Mr Lincoln's, hand, but that the spirit world had turned on the lights to show the fraud and rid Mr Lincoln of the possessing entity. This satisfied most of the Society's membership, and on we went."

CALLED by "one of the staff" to prevent a disturbance outside the McDonald's in Pushkin Square, Inspector Vintor Egon of the Moscow Regional Police said: "When we arrived we found Ms Olda Ashmerov and her sister Sonia demonstrating. Olda was dressed as a cow and Sonia as Count Leo Tolstoy, the great writer. Olda said that they were part of Russia's first Animal Rights Fighters, and that Count Leo Tolstoy was a vegetarian as well as a writer. I told them they were free to demonstrate but they must not hand out free vegeburgers to the queue without a catering licence. They had an American supporter with them, Mr James Zolz. He was carrying a placard that read MORE WHEAT — LESS MEAT *in English and Russian."*

ON HIS apology, the editor of the *Irish News* said: "The men loading the lorry with aid for Bosnia were not, as we said, former convicts making good, but Mr John Kavanagh and Mr John O'Hare from the Light of Christ Men's Prayer Group."

INFORMATION: Haringey Independent 29.10.92; Karachi Dawn 30.10.92; Psychic News 7.11.92; Toronto Globe & Mail 1.11.92; Irish News 2.10.92. MONITORS: Dave Hastings, Dennis Doyne, Ms M. Woodward, Brendan J. O'Byrne, R. Park.

EYE FOR CHILDREN

One of Britain's Greatest Living Writers, A.N. Wislon, retells

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

as it probably happened

JOSEPH and Mary probably never met. Recent research suggests that, if he existed, Joseph was not a carpenter but a rich nobleman, living in what is now Iraq. Historians have long known that the story of the census in the time of Augustus was made up in the 4th century by the Roman historian Nedus Sherrinus as an amusing after-dinner anecdote. Archaeologists have discovered no stables in the area around Bethlehem, so Jesus was most likely born at home in a tent (or possibly underwater in Lake Tiberius). The "shepherds", long familiar from the Gospel story, were in fact Palestinian terrorists out to overthrow the Roman administration. This confusion arose from the similarity of the Hebrew word "sephardim" (terrorists) and

the English word "shepherds".

A happy Christmas to you all.

© *Christopher Sincere-Stevenson 1992*

O·B·N

Norman Lamont is doing brilliantly an immensely difficult and time-consuming job.

The Sun recently acknowledged this. But it can never resist the vicious fun of persecuting him if it sees an opening.

Never mind the danger of putting him off his stroke when fighting for the best possible deal from the EC. Like resisting the new EC aim to cancel our £2 billion rebate.

I know Mr Lamont. He's worth many times more than the £470 allegedly slow payment on his credit card.

He dashes or flies from meeting to meeting. In his hurry and absorption in his job he often leaves things behind.

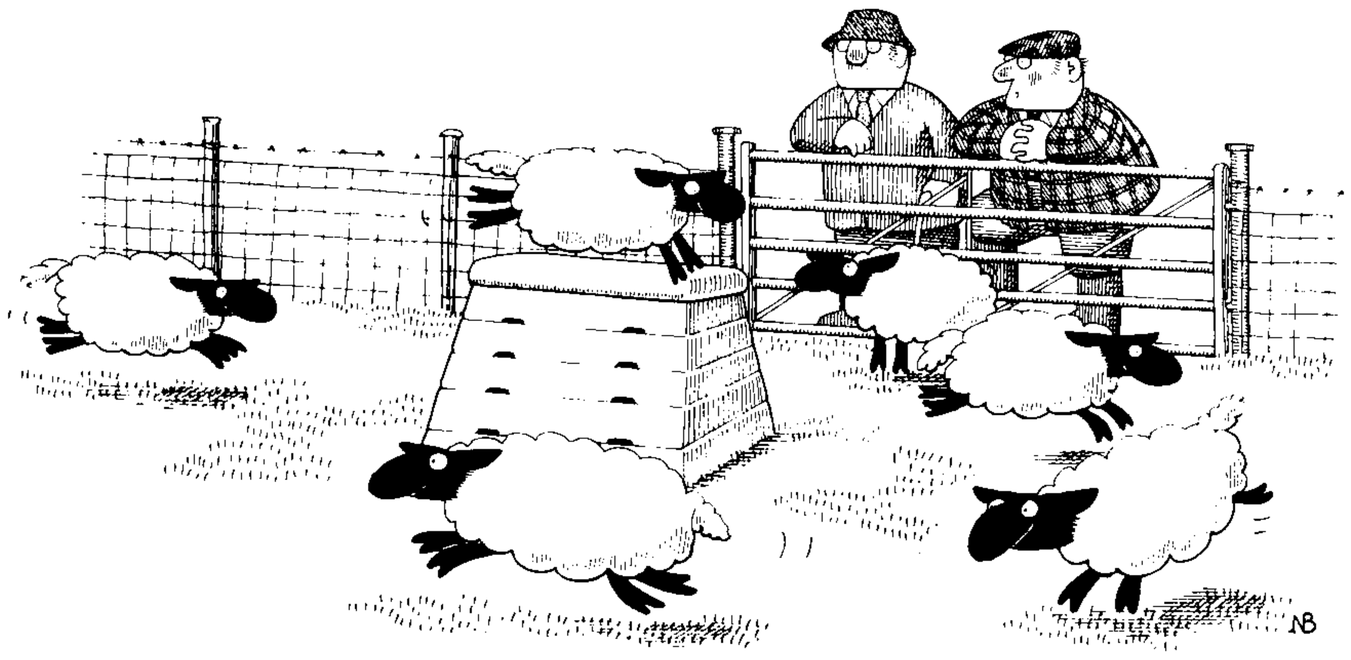
WOODROW WYATT
News of the World

Rupert Murdoch pays my wages but, interest declared, William Shawcross's study of the Aussie-born American entrepreneur (*Murdoch*, Chatto & Windus, £18.99) is compulsive reading. Whatever you think of his methods and his politics, Murdoch is a genuine Colossus bestriding the global communications business, a man who has revolutionised the British newspaper industry and the nation's viewing habits. This book tells you how he did it.

GARRY BUSHELL
Mensa Magazine

Submitted by Leslie-Ann Giovnilli, Anon.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



"There's something fishy going on, but I'm not sure what"

THRESHER'S
Suppliers of
Ye Fineft Sack to
Maſter Lamont

Ye Daily Tudorgraph

Edited by Ye Marquess of Haſtings
at ye Canarie Wharf

Now In Its
200th Year
YE MOUFETRAP
– Book Now

Conradde ye Blakke. Prop. | 2 Groats | 15 December in Ye Yeare of Our Lorde 1529

ROYAL FPLIT SHOCKE

COUPLE TO LEAD FEPARATE LIVES

by our Correſpondent Master Hugh Montgomerie of Massingberdde

YE WHOLE nation was faddened by ye fenfational news that his Majesty King Henry and his Queen Katharine have decided to live feparately.

At present there are no plans for ye King to behead her.

Ye couple have "a deep refpect" for each other, and have reached an "amicable agreement" never to meet again.

ANDREW MORTON'S FORK

Ye King, 49 stone, plans to set up the new Church of England which will allow him to do whatever he likes.

Archbishop Carey faid today: "There if no reason why a power-crazed divorced lunatic should not be head of the Church of England, but quoth me not, old boy, or I might end up in ye fire."

Courtiers were quick to express fympathy for ye King and ye Queen in their "time of forrow and fadness". Said My Lord St John of Wolsley: "The hearts and prayers of all ye nation go out to the unhappy couple."

"And we muft hope," he added, "that from now on ye fcribblers and all manner of hackes will refpect ye privacy of ye King and ye Queene."

A recent ſtudie of Ye King by Maſter Holbein

"NO THIRD PARTY INVOLVED IN FPLIT"

by TV's Sir Thomas More, Editor of Ye Lord's Daye Tudorgraph

A palace spokesman was quick to deny that any third parties were involved in the tragic Royal separation.

Recent reports had linked the name of His Gracious Majesty with Mistreſs Anne Boleyn, a pouting upper-class beauty. But this is difmissed as "pure fpeculation" by Mafter Carter Rucke, the Royal Libelmafter, who threatened that anyone who repeated these "grofs and wicked flanders" would be burned at the ftake.

FAIRY TALE ROMANCE THAT ENDED IN TEARS

Can it only have been in the year of Our Lorde 1502 that the handsome, dashing Prince Hal wedded ye beautiful Princess Katharine from Aragon?

Their nuptial celebrations in ye Abbey were witnessed by a record 350 people.

Yet today ye dream has turned to aſhes *(continued folio 94).*

Miſtress Glenda Slagge of Ye Streete By Ye Fleete River

Ye Wench They Cannot Gagge

Hats off to ye Royal Couple for their honestie and courage in facing up to ye problem suffered by one in 3 million married couples in Tudor England todaye.

I faye "Heads Off" to everyone – except of course Hif Majestie!

Here they are – Miſtress Glenda's Yummy Yeomen of 1529!!

Ye Duke of Somerfet – so he hath ye poxe, but who hathn't?

Ye Earl of Northumberland – ditto.

Sir Marmalade of Gusset – crazy name, crazy guy!

ON OTHER PAGES

Unfunny Cartoon by Raphael p.6.

Is This Ye Ende of Ye Monaſteries? afks Thos. Cromwell p.7.

Why I Think Queen Katharine Is Absolutely Lovely by Maſter Andrew Wilſon p.8.

I Saw It All In Ye Ftars, saith our expert Copernicus p.24.

Ye Plague – Is It Godde's Judgement On Ye Gaye Community? asks Ye Editor of Ye Olde Loonie p.36.

PRINCE EDWARD NOT TO DIVORCE

by Our Royal-Watching Staff **James Whitakers-Allmadeup, Lady Antonia Holden-Guest, Andrew Mortonsofgarbage and the late Nigella Dumpster**

GOOD news for the beleaguered Palace came last night from the House of Commons, when the Prime Minister announced that Prince Edward has no plans to divorce in the near future.

Mr Major told a shocked House that it was "a matter of some sadness for the Prince that he was unable to announce his formal separation from anyone". "However," the Prime Minister went on, "should the Prince ever marry, I can assure the House that he will immediately separate from his partner, whomsoever he or she may be."

The Queen Mother was last night unavailable for comment, although she is in perfect health.

TERRIBLE SHOWER BRINGS MISERY TO BRITAIN

by Our Underwater Staff **Michael Fish**

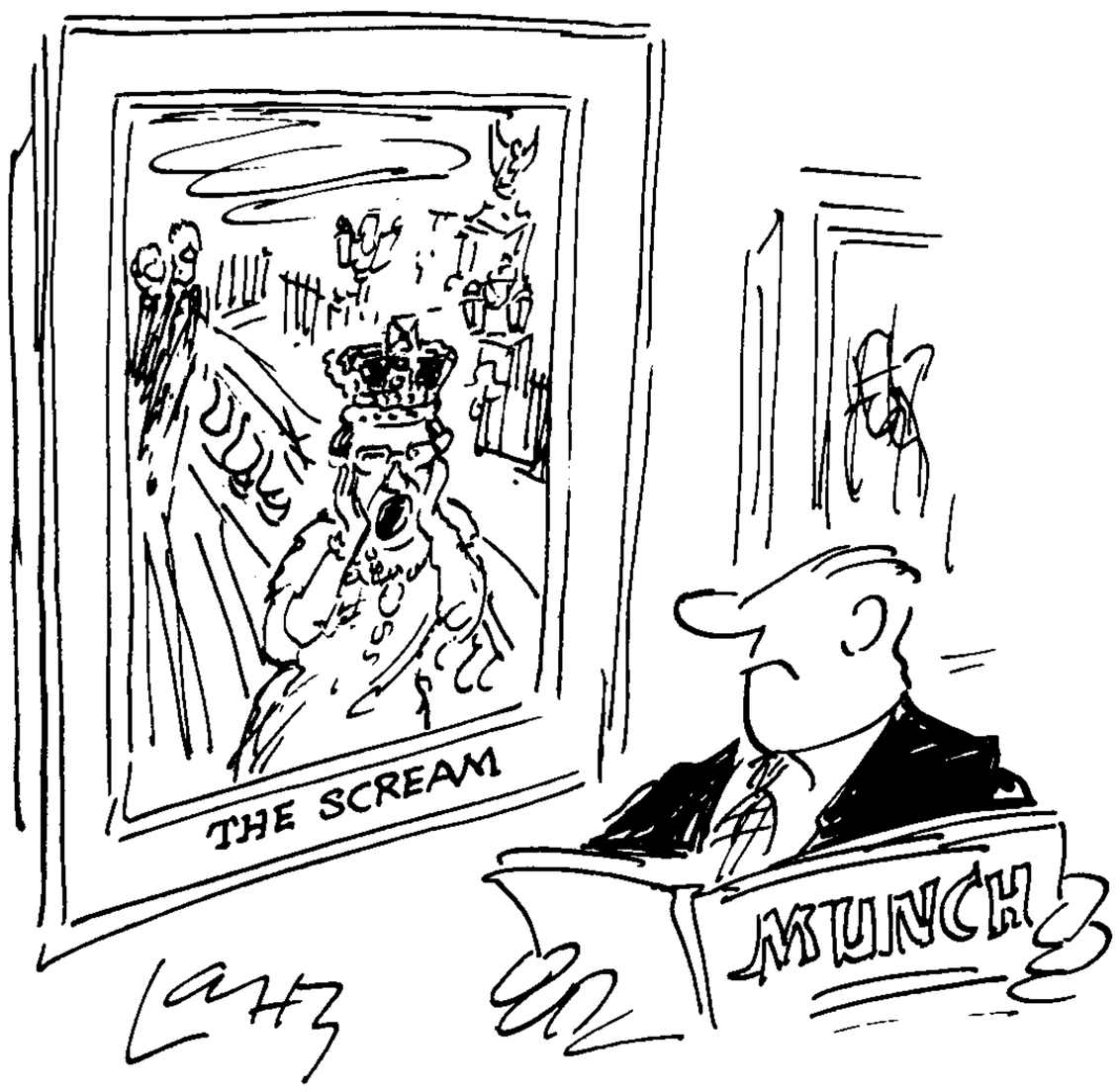
BRITAIN is grinding to a halt, say experts, after the worst shower in living memory were elected in June of this year.

"They really are awful," claimed a rather wet John Smith. "Even worse than the last shower which went on for 11 years."

The country has been declared a disaster zone as floods of cock-ups threaten to engulf the nation and the Government makes heavy weather of it.

"It's been non-stop," said a Conservative spokesman. "We're up to our necks in it and completely out of our depth."

And Met men say there's more to come, with new storms coming in from Edinburgh, the Middle East and Thresher the off-licence.



Barry Norman's Top 10 TV Films This Christmas

"The Superguns of Navarone" *(Friday, 7pm)*

Christmas Eve: BBC-2 (10.40pm)

The Third Man (1989). Remake of 1948 Orson Welles classic, set in Philadelphia, starring Warren Beatty, Tom Cruise and Michelle Pfeiffer. Haunting title song by Sting.

Christmas Day: BBC-1 (3pm)

The Palins Strike Back (1988). Spielberg classic about small town in America terrorised by tiny mechanical creatures from outer space. At first they make friends with the doctor's young son, but turn nasty when subjected to British travel series on TV. Starring Jeremy Isaacs as the doctor, Gillian Widdicombe as his crazed wife and introduced 9-year-old Dudley Moore Jr as "Kippie".

Boxing Day: Channel 4 (11.15pm)

Rio Calypso (1961). Continuing Channel 4's Harry Belafonte season, with young wannabe recording star Harry discovered in a Caribbean banana-grove by top New York impresario 'Spats' Silvester. He takes New York by storm but is later sent to the electric chair when he is falsely accused of rape by a white racist judge.

Holiday Monday: ITV (4.50pm)

Mr Deedes Goes To Canary Wharf (1954). Terry-Thomas plays Bill Deedes, a veteran newspaperman down on his luck, who finds himself working on the 49th floor of an East End tower block. Also stars Arthur Askey, as ace reporter Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, Richard Wattis, as editor Max Hastings, and Shirley-Anne Field as Barbara, the proprietor's sex-bomb wife.

New Year's Eve: BBC-1 (6.40pm)

They Flew To Bruges (1976). Indifferent remake of earlier wartime classic about the RAF's now legendary *raid on Berlin*. Edward Fox takes the Richard Burton part of Squadron-Leader Enfield, Steve McQueen played Churchill and Raquel Welch is Nurse Soames.

HOW IT WILL WORK

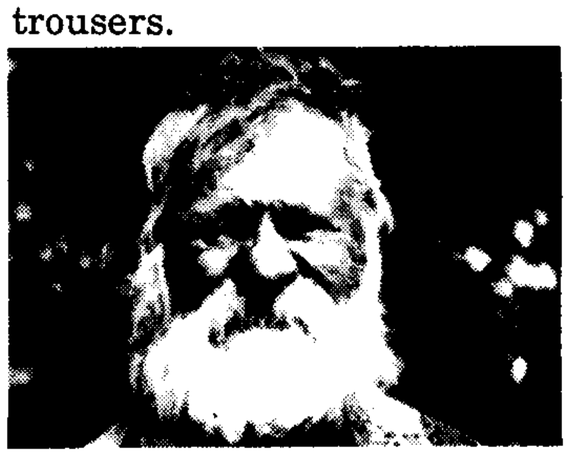
By Penny JunoanythingabouttheRoyalscauseIdon't and James "Deeplysaddened" Whattakreep (with no additional material by Nigel Pratt-Dumpster)

FOLLOWING the sensational break-up of the Royal Marriage announced last week, two very contrasting courts will wield the Royal Power into the next century, *writes Lady Antonia Wholly-Guesswork (author of "The Prince Charles I Never Met").*

These are the new look "separate courts" of Charles and Diana:

The Chazzites

1. **Belinda Harpie**, 37. Formidable, gorgeous, pouting PR expert who will advise the Prince on key issues such as choice of trousers.



2. **Sir Laurens Van der Pump**, 99. Long-time spiritual mentor to the Prince. Will advise on key issues such as auspicious dates in the calendar for travelling, money and romance.

3. **Lady Legovia Amstrad-Barker**, 45. Long-time confidante and intimate of the Prince. Will advise on key issues such as what to wear under his trousers.

4. **Dr Jonathon Porridge**, 43. Environmentalist and agrarian economist. Will advise Prince on key issues such as what cereal he should eat with his breakfast.

The Di-Hards

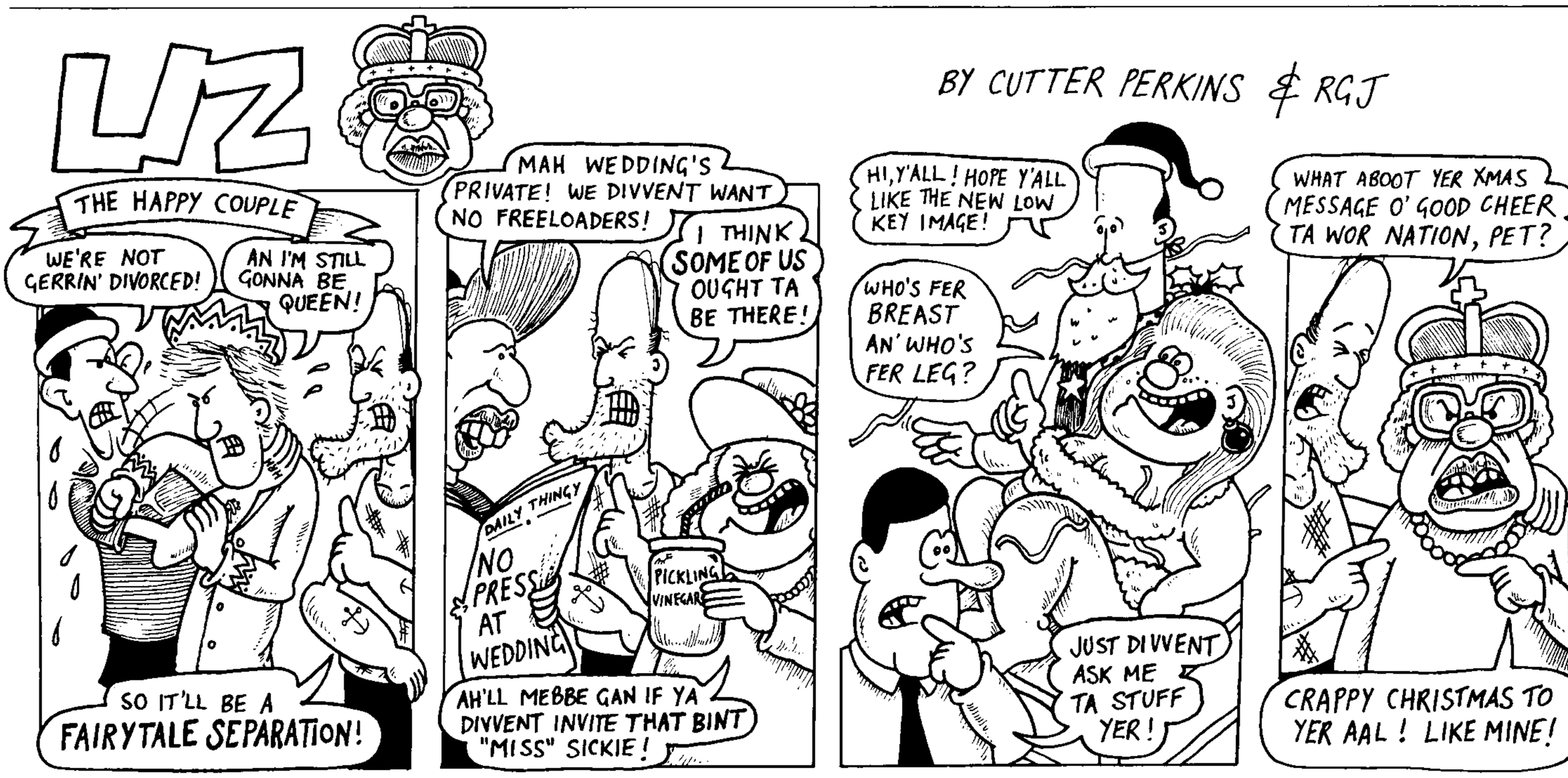
1. **Lieutenant Archie Dingball-Twytte**, 33. 27th/41st Queen's Own Hooray Henries. A long-time friend of the Princess, he will advise on key issues such as how terrific she looks in that pink dress.

2. **Lady Georgie Cavendish**, 31. Long-term schoolchum and flatmate of Diana's. She will advise on key issues such as how awful Charles is, how right she was to leave him, and how she should ring up the *Sun* and tell them all about it.

3. **Mother Theresa of Calcutta**, 92. Key admirer of Diana's charity work. Mother Teresa will advise the Princess on how to get into the same photograph as herself.

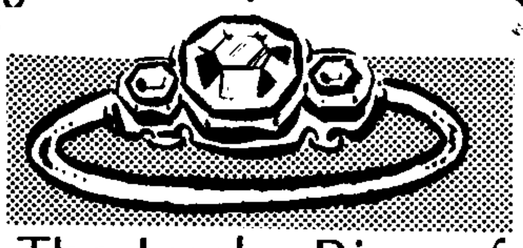
4. **Giuseppe Calamari**, 49. Patron of the fashionable Knightsbridge restaurant *San Wichbar*. He will advise on Today's Specials, such as spaghetti carbonara or spaghetti bolognese. He will also wield a giant pepper pot and say "Bella, bella, Principessa" in a sycophantic voice.

(That's enough courtiers. Ed.)


LIZ
THE HAPPY COUPLE
WE'RE NOT GERRIN' DIVORCED!
AN I'M STILL GONNA BE QUEEN!
SO IT'LL BE A FAIRYTALE SEPARATION!
MAH WEDDING'S PRIVATE! WE DIVVENT WANT NO FREELOADERS!
I THINK SOME OF US OUGHT TA BE THERE!
DAILY THINGY
NO PRESS AT WEDDING
PICKLING VINEGAR
AH'LL MEBBE GAN IF YA DIVVENT INVITE THAT BINT "MISS" SICKIE!
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
HI, Y'ALL! HOPE Y'ALL LIKE THE NEW LOW KEY IMAGE!
WHO'S FER BREAST AN' WHO'S FER LEG?
JUST DIVVENT ASK ME TA STUFF YER!
WHAT ABOOT YER XMAS MESSAGE O' GOOD CHEER TA WOR NATION, PET?
CRAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YER AAL! LIKE MINE!

GNOME'S XMA

£2.79 plus VAT



The Lucky Ring of RATNER!!

FOR centuries the villagers of Ratner, high up in the Tyrolean Alps, have enjoyed remarkable good fortune, thanks to their "lucky ring" preserved in the shrine of their local saint, St Gerald of Krappola. Now genuine-style replicas of the "lucky ring", each personally blessed by the Bishop of Ratner, can be yours for less than the price of a prawn sandwich.

Says Mr D.M. of Putney: "As a former Cabinet Minister, I can vouch for the effect of the Lucky Ring of Ratner over the last year."

Fed Up With Missing Those Vital Calls While You're Doing The Housework?

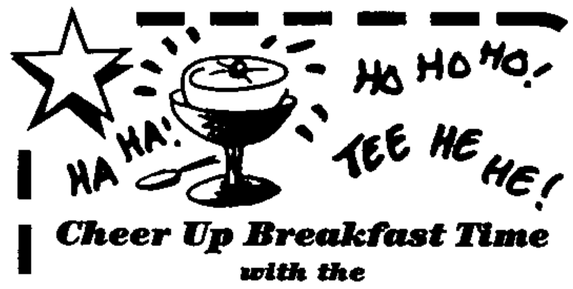
Now

HOOV-O-PHONE

from Canada ensures that you are "plugged in" at all times!

Extra-loud bell and flashing light (fax extra)

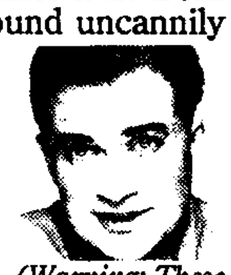
Price: £985.99



Cheer Up Breakfast Time with the

Laughing Grapefruit of Zimbabwe

■ As your knife cuts into the skin of this exotic breakfast fruit from Africa, it emits a sound uncannily like a human laugh.



TV's Harry Enfield says: "These fruits are certainly loadsa larffs, Mr Cholmondley-Warner!"

●Case of 12: 20p. *(Warning: These fruits are easily damaged in transit, and are not guaranteed to "laugh" every time.)*

LATEST SEASONAL AID!

New from Uzbekhistan

Eject-O-Porch

At last! An end to unwanted carol singing misery! No more "Ding Dong Merrily On High" trauma thanks to this breakthrough in Porch Innovation.

Eject-o-Porch is voice-sensitive, programmed to activate at the sound of all known Christmas carols! One minute it's Away In A Manger, the next it's Away Over The Gate as Eject-o-Porch sends anything up to fifty singers into the road.

The high-powered sprung platform can be easily fitted, and withstands all weather.

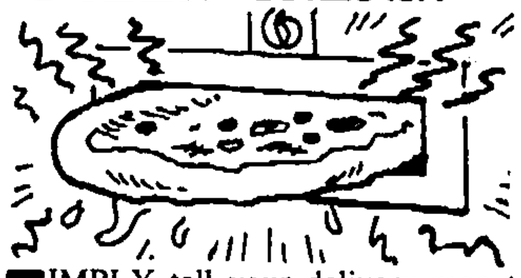
£278,422.31p *(batteries extra)*

Plays theme tune from BBC's Trainer

PIZZA LOVERS

Say goodbye to cold pizza misery with the sensational Oven Letter Box from Mozambique.

PIZZA-THERM™



SIMPLY tell your delivery man to post your pizza directly into the **Pizza-Therm** and — hey presto! — oven automatically turns on and your favourite Pepperoni 'n' Mozzarella keeps piping hot!!

Takes: small, regular, family, deep pie and thin crust.

Price: £378,322 + VAT

Plays theme tune from TV's Have I Got News For You

Keep Fit fans

New from the Aerobic Factory of Helsinki, the incredible

NAUTILUS

TOOTHBRUSH PK743™

From the world's leading Oral Hygiene and Body Toning Laboratories comes a breakthrough in combined Dental-Cardio-Vascular technology.

Scientists have proved that cleaning your teeth with the specially weighted Nautilus Toothbrush is the equivalent of running fifty miles a day!

Choice of weights: Light, Medium, Eve Pollard

Plays theme tune from BBC's Between The Lines.

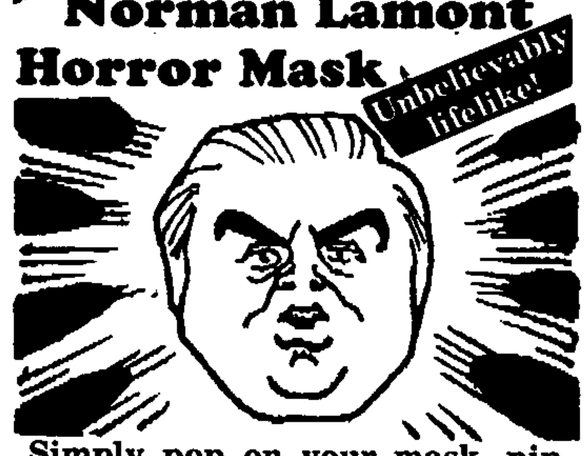
Price £1.10 (or set of 3: £1.11)

Will give hours of fun!

Scare your local wine merchant with the

Norman Lamont Horror Mask

Unbelievably lifelike!



Simply pop on your mask, nip down to Threshers and ask for some champagne and cheap cigarettes!! Just watch the assistant's face as he imagines losing his job!! Hilarious!!

Price 35p per dozen (Access not accepted)

TV Lovers

Bid Sloppy English Goodbye! With the amazing

DE-SCRAMBLO-VOX

Now at last you can understand what Jonathan Ross is saying!!

THIS revolution in televisual engineering allows you to decode the voice patterns of your favourite unintelligible celebrities! The "De-Scramblo-Vox", when fitted to an ordinary television, simultaneously translates what the stars are trying to say into standard English!!

Easy to install, works off mains, fully guaranteed for whole week.

Proven effective on: ● Janet Street Porter ● Derek Jameson ● Man on The Word

Price: £60,302

Safe Sex Lovers!!!

No more fumbling-around-in-the-dark misery before you safe sex session can begin with

CONDOLUME

Each prophylactic is coated with a special EC-approved luminous paint, making it easy to locate even on the darkest night!!

Price: Packet of Three £39.99

Colours: Michael Green, Rabbi Blue, Cilla Black.

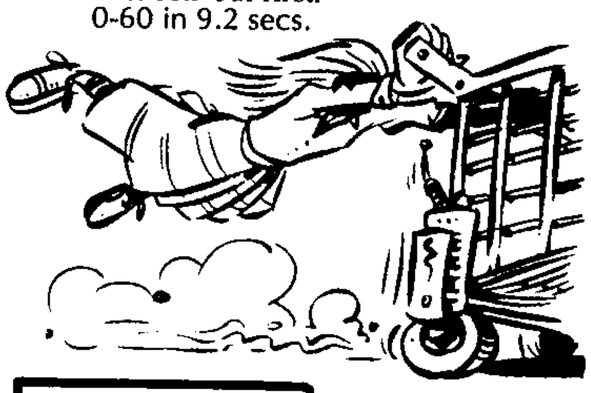
SUPERMARKET LOVERS!!

Tired of pushing that oh-so-heavy trolley down the aisles? Then just fit

ELECTROLLEY

Takes shopping into the 21st century. This Polish breakthrough in consumer convenience is now yours at a fraction of the original price. Watch your fellow-shoppers go green with envy as you get to the check-out first!

0-60 in 9.2 secs.



Original price: 2 billion zlotys. Our price: £19.95
Plays Chopin's Ballade in C Sharp Minor

Says Nigel Mansell: "Now Electrolley is here I am retiring from Formula 1!"

Recession Beater — make ££££s!!

Latest idea from St Petersburg

Turn your spare room into an Adult Cinema with the complete OVER 18 CLUB kit!

TIMES are hard for everyone but you can coin it in using just your TV and guest room!! Just send off for the complete OVER 18 CLUB kit, and with an investment of only 50p a week you can become a millionaire within 3 months.*

Kit comprises: Row of seats, dirty carpet, plus video of your choice (Basic Instinct or Basic Instinct).

Price £3.50

*This is a lie

XMAS MAIL MART

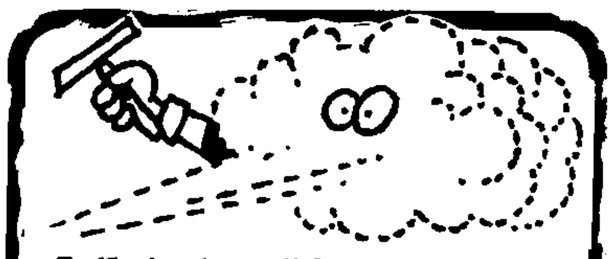
EXCLUSIVE TO GNOME MART!!

Your own historic memento of an unforgettable moment in our island story — the great ***Windsor Castle Fire*** *of 1992.*

Now, for only £250,00, you can acquire an authenticated fragment of charred wood, personally selected from the Castle ruins by world-famous historian Dr Roy Strong.

Each fragment is mounted in durable perspex and comes with a certificate of authentication signed by Dr Strong and carrying a miniature replica of the Royal Seal of Queen Elizabeth II.

Limited edition of 3 million. Order now to avoid disappointment.



Traffic Jam Lovers!! Say goodbye forever to unwanted roadside windscreen cleaners with

SCREENOGAS

☐ No sooner do they pull back the wiper blade to administer dirty suds to your screen than a powerful jet of lethal gas is released from the base of the wiper and — hey presto! — your uninvited car attendant is gasping for breath.

Each can (supplied by Matrix Churchill) lasts up to 10 years and can kill 20,000 people.

WARNING: Perfectly safe to animals, EC-approved.

Price: £50,412 (plus VAT)

(Plays selection from Moby Dick)

PISCOPHILES!

At last your own **PERSONALISED FISH**

New from the underwater farms of Newfoundland, the amazing Personalised Fish — for the fish connoisseur who has everything! Just imagine your friends' surprise when they look in your tank and see your name on the fishes' sides!!

Names: Wayne, Karen, Jason Donovan.

Price: £2,000

CAR BOOT ENTHUSIASTS!

Nothing left to sell? No problem with

CARBOOTY

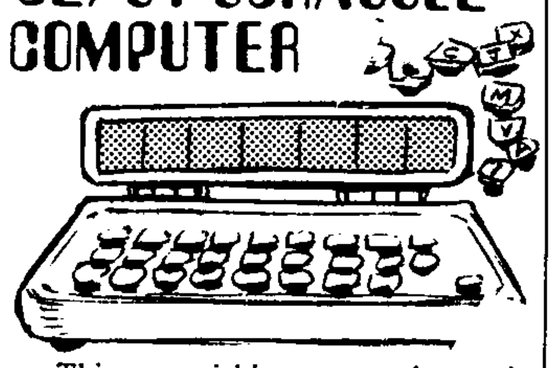
An incredible ready-made selection of Car Boot-style items that fits directly into the boot of **YOUR** family car!

No more searching-the-cellar misery! Just load up the Car Booty and enjoy Britain's No 1 favourite leisure pastime.

Guaranteed to include: ● ***six rusty spoons*** ● ***one cracked tea-cup*** ● ***one plastic orange squeezer*** ● ***one pair smelly curtains*** ● ***one roller skate (left)*** ● ***china dog (ear missing)*** ● ***set of four coasters (Devon coaching scenes)*** ● ***Van Gogh's Sunflowers (print) and paperback edition of Jeffrey Archer's As The Crow Flies (some pages missing).*** ***£15,722***

TAKE THE FUN OUT OF SCRABBLE!! WITH THE

CZ704 SCRABBLE COMPUTER



This astonishing new electronic miracle from Taiwan brings an end to hours of Scrabble enjoyment. Simply tap in your seven letters and within seconds the 40-Megabyte RAM chip will give you onscreen access to all possible combinations to achieve maximum score value.

Reduces playing time of game to 10 minutes (four players).

Price: £2.65

(Plays theme tune from Radio 4's Eurofile)

Christmas Novelty

Watch your holly grow a beard with new

Bearded Holly

from the Federal Republic of Malaysia.

Over the 12 days of Xmas, you can see your holly grow a genuine Santa-style beard up to 2cm long. EC Approved.

Styles include: Mike Gatting, Rolf Harris, the late Ayatollah Khomeini.

Price: 10p for 12 sprigs

HELLO! LOVERS!

● **NOW you too can be in the World's Most Popular Magazine!**

Imagine your friends' surprise when they look through your copy and see heartwarming photographs of ★ *YOU* in your lovely bathroom ★ *YOU* playing with dog on lawn ★ *YOU* sitting on sofa wearing too much makeup.

How it works:

● ***We*** **supply authentic** ***Hello!*** **magazine with empty double-page spread and tube of glue.** ● ***You*** **just stick in your favourite family photos** ***AND*** **— hey presto! — you're either divorced or dead** *(shurely 'famous'? Ed).*

Price: £77.39 (not including glue)

"New Age" Labour-Saving Device (from Guatemala)

BABYSHINE

● As your favourite baby crawls around the kitchen, he or she is helping Mum do the housework!! Four specially treated pads attached to baby's knees 'n' elbows will clean your tile or lino floor until it gleams like new!

Warning: Pads contain toxic chemicals which may be harmful to children

Set of 4: £9.99. Colours: Brillo

BATHTIME BOON!

No more Cold Flannel Misery on wintry mornings, thanks to your new

THERMAFLAN

A breakthrough from Tunisian scientists! Simply plug in "Thermaflan" to any socket and within minutes your flannel's nice 'n' warm!!

WARNING: Dangerous to use in proximity to water.

Choice of colours: white

Price: £739

Dog Lovers

New for Christmas **CANINETENDO**

CANINETENDO

DON'T LEAVE FIDO OUT OF THE FUN!

Now at last your dog can have his own video game, especially designed to be played with his paw! Easy to operate, the ***Caninetendo*** *provides hours of indoor fun with a wide range of software, including:*

- ***Chasing cat up tree***
- ***Chasing car down road***
- ***Savaging Mr Patel the Newsagent (Rottweilers only)***

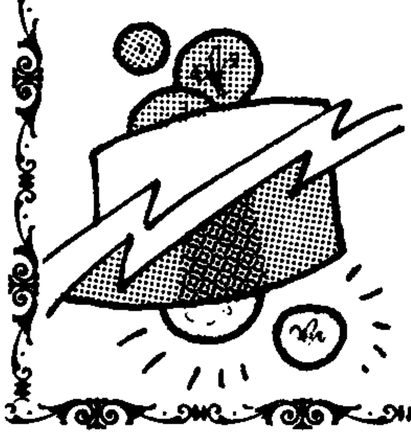
Price: £7.99 (+ £2,000 p&p)

Non-toxic. Batteries extra.

Plays theme tune from Scottish Widows Pension Advert

No more dully dreary 2p coins thanks to

TOOPEEGLEAM



■ *Simply place your two-pence pieces in the "Toopeegleam" and leave in the container.*

Six weeks later — hey presto! Your small change is mint-clean and ready to use!!

Price: 12oz jar £99.99

(plays theme tune from Eldorado)

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

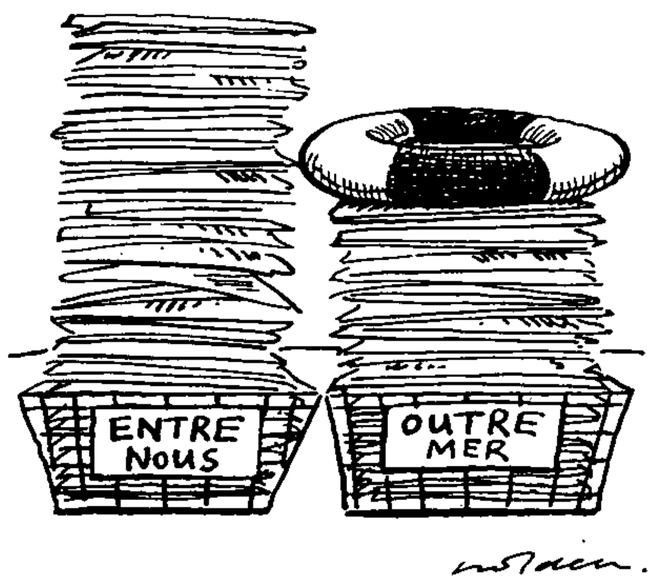
Monday

This is the most important and historic week of the whole of my European Presidency. Everyone is coming to Edinburgh for my Summit Conference. "I am going to tell them about all the things I have achieved during my six months," I told my wife Norma over my breakfast of All Bran. "That'll take 30 seconds," she said. "What are you going to talk about the rest of the time?"

"Well," I explained, "I have a very long agenda. Can I try it out on you?

1. President (Me): Speech of Welcome.
2. Adjourn for coffee.
3. Reception by Mayor of Edinburgh.
4. Any Other Business."

Here Mr Hurd has added in red pen, underlined 12 times: "Do not on any account mention the following: the Danish problem, the British problem, the Budget problem, the Gatt problem,



the French problem, the German problem, the ERM problem, the Swiss problem, Mr Lamont's problem with his Access bill."

There is a lot to remember when you are the President of Europe. Oh yes!

Tuesday

Only four more days to go to my great Summit Conference! I have had to work very hard on my speech, due to all the things which Mr Hurd says it might not be prudent to mention. Luckily, however, I remembered my great triumph with my Yugoslav peace conference, when everyone agreed that I had made a very bold and imaginative contribution to stopping the war by Christmas. I was writing this into my speech until well after half past nine last night, when Mr Hurd came round.

"By the way, Prime Minister," he said in his toffee-nosed way, "you're not going to mention Yugoslavia, are you?"

"Oh yes," I said, "it has been my greatest success since the election."

"Oh dear," said Mr Hurd. "We really are in trouble then."

Wednesday

I saw in the paper this morning that Mr Smith has made himself look very silly by saying that I have done nothing as President of Europe. He will certainly get a shock when he hears my speech at Edinburgh!

I said to the Cabinet: "What has Mr Smith done? He is just a boring little man in a suit and glasses who has totally failed to inspire his party and sends the House of Commons to sleep every time he gets up."

Everyone laughed at my brilliant summing up of Mr Smith.

This afternoon while I was trying to write my Edinburgh speech all over again (this time with a different colour biro for luck!), Mr Hurd came in looking not inconsiderably ashen-faced.

"It's no good, Prime Minister," he said. "The whole thing is a complete disaster."

"Do you think I should go back to the grey biro then?" I asked him.

"No, you twit," he said frankly, as one colleague to another, "I mean Edinburgh, the Summit, Maastricht, Europe, your Presidency — it's all hopeless."

"Oh dear, Douglas," I said in my special calm voice. "You're beginning to sound like Mr Lamont. I do hope you're not going to come in here wearing you underpants over your head like he did last night."

Mr Hurd raised his eyebrows and began rummaging through my in-tray. "There must be something in here that'll help — look at this!" he cried. "This is what we're looking for. You just read it out in the Commons tomorrow and they will all forget about your Edinburgh speech."

It was a letter from Buckingham Palace announcing the not inconsiderably sad news of yet another royal separation — this time of the Prince of Wales and Princess Diana, who I have been lucky enough to meet on a number of occasions. I at once went to tell Norman, who is interested in this kind of thing.

"I have something very important and secret to tell you," I said. "Not now, John," she said. "I am waiting for a special newsflash on TV about the breakup of the Royal marriage. Isn't it silly? After all, there are plenty of couples who manage to stick together even if they haven't got anything in common."

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

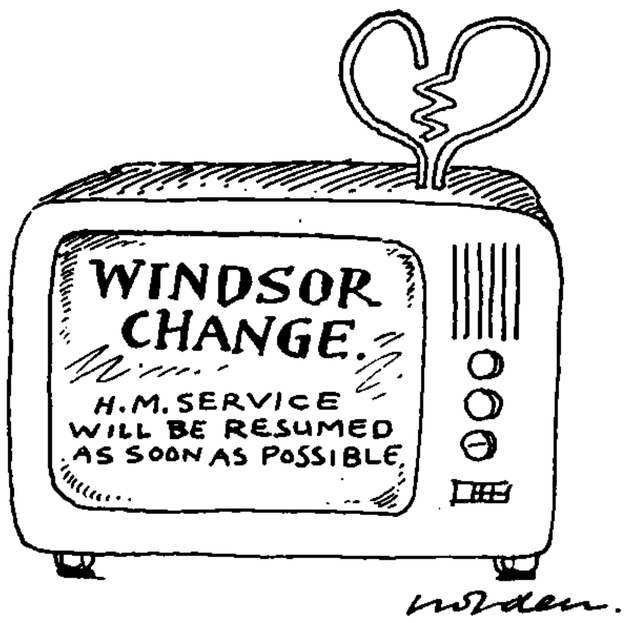
Too busy to write diary. Totally preoccupied by Royal Crisis.

Sunday

The conference that everyone had forgotten about has turned out well after all! The Edinburgh Summit has been a not inconsiderable personal triumph. That is what it said in the final communiqué, which made it in no small measure clear that I had saved the day for Europe! I was quite surprised by this since whenever I had said anything at the conference all the other people had shouted at me in their different languages and shaken their heads. It just goes to show how deceptive appearances can be.

On the aeroplane back we had an in-flight snack which was very tasty, consisting of a roll and butter with a cheese spread and a potato salad all wrapped up in clingfilm. Mr Hurd did not eat his because he said he had already had his breakfast, thank you, in his typically snooty voice.

"What exactly has been agreed, Douglas?" I asked him, as the Captain told us we were passing over Leicester. "It is all very complicated," Mr Hurd replied, "but just take it from me it has



been a great victory for your Presidency."

"But what about the Danes?" I asked, hoping to catch him out.

"We will have to wait for the people to decide."

"Our people?" I queried.

"No, theirs," he snapped. "Don't be stupid."

"But what about our Budget contribution?" I enquired, showing him that I had understood what was happening at the conference, despite all the foreign languages.

"Aha!" said Mr Hurd, and then went to the toilet.

JOHN MAJOR'S DIARIES — ***the book. Reprinted three times and still a best-seller — don't miss it. £4.99***

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Dan Maskell, The
Voice of Wimbledon

So. Farewell
Then

Dan Maskell.

The voice of
Wimbledon.

"Oh, I
Say."

That was
Your catchphrase.

Say what
Exactly?

Now we
Shall never
Know.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Christopher Barkworth

MANY of us who watched the eclipse in our back gardens in Somerset cannot help but feel a deepening sense of the symbolism of the black shadow encroaching on the circle of light. As we watched with mounting horror as the bright orb was slowly devoured by the forces of darkness, our hearts went out to Prince Charles *(contd p. 94)*

ON OTHER PAGES

Prince Charles Moore — Can he remain head of the Sunday Telegraph? by Huge Montgomery Massive-Snob p.5

I watch the eclipse of the Sunday Telegraph by astronomer Patrick Charles Moore p.7

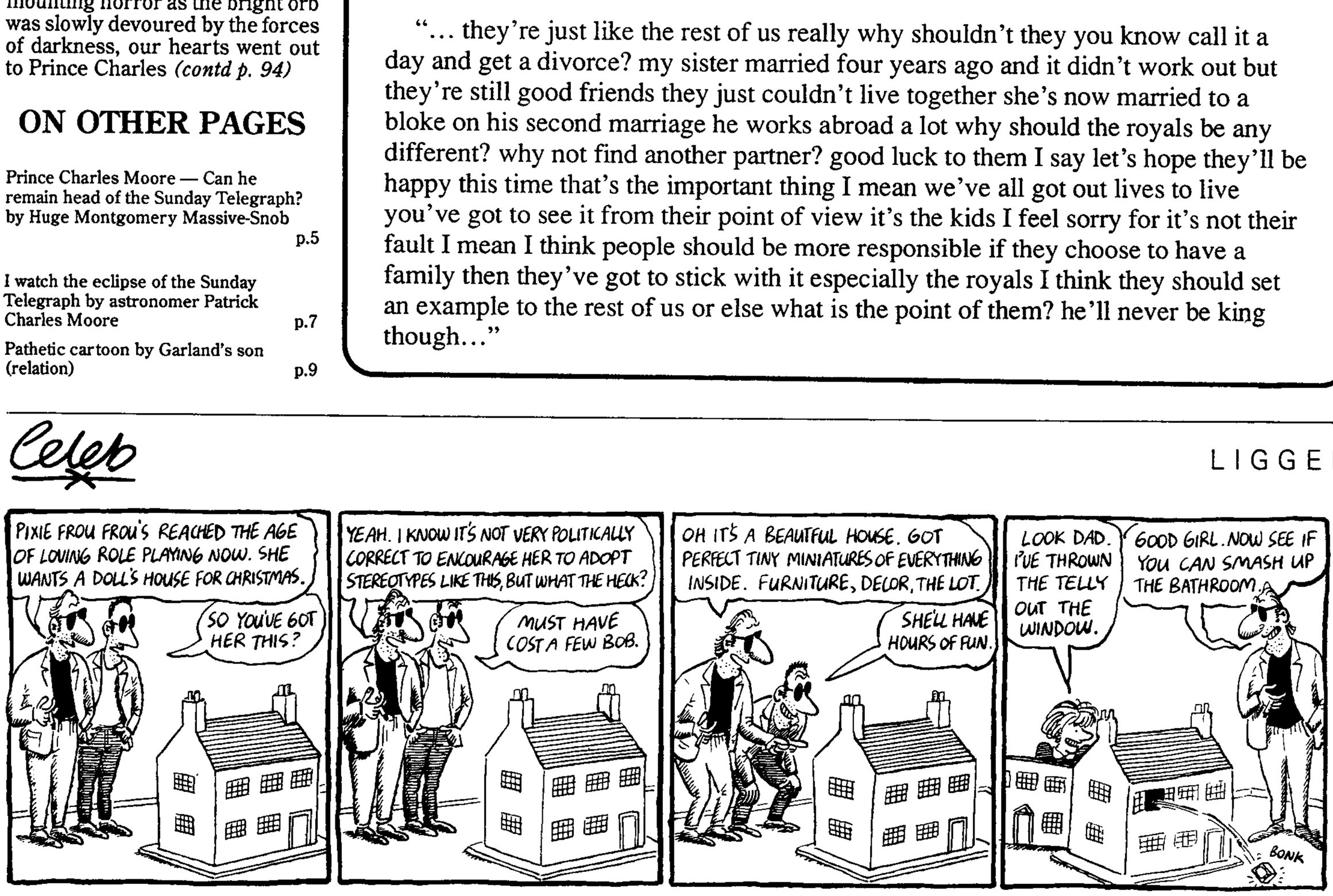
Pathetic cartoon by Garland's son (relation) p.9

Great Bores Of Today.

"... they're just like the rest of us really why shouldn't they you know call it a day and get a divorce? my sister married four years ago and it didn't work out but they're still good friends they just couldn't live together she's now married to a bloke on his second marriage he works abroad a lot why should the royals be any different? why not find another partner? good luck to them I say let's hope they'll be happy this time that's the important thing I mean we've all got out lives to live you've got to see it from their point of view it's the kids I feel sorry for it's not their fault I mean I think people should be more responsible if they choose to have a family then they've got to stick with it especially the royals I think they should set an example to the rest of us or else what is the point of them? he'll never be king though..."

Celeb

LIGGER


PIXIE FROU FROU'S REACHED THE AGE OF LOVING ROLE PLAYING NOW. SHE WANTS A DOLL'S HOUSE FOR CHRISTMAS.
SO YOU'VE GOT HER THIS?
YEAH. I KNOW IT'S NOT VERY POLITICALLY CORRECT TO ENCOURAGE HER TO ADOPT STEREOTYPES LIKE THIS, BUT WHAT THE HECK?
MUST HAVE COST A FEW BOB.
OH IT'S A BEAUTFUL HOUSE. GOT PERFECT TINY MINIATURES OF EVERYTHING INSIDE. FURNITURE, DECOR, THE LOT.
SHE'LL HAVE HOURS OF FUN.
LOOK DAD. I'VE THROWN THE TELLY OUT THE WINDOW.
GOOD GIRL. NOW SEE IF YOU CAN SMASH UP THE BATHROOM.
BONK

E.J. Thribb, Ted Whohes and much more in* POETRY CORNER; *£4.99, out now!

Lesser-known entrances to Narnia...

The Lion, The Witch and the Bidet

QUEEN MOTHER SNUBS HAPPY COUPLE

by our Royal Staff **Andrew Mortonsofgarbage**

THE QUEEN Mother shocked the nation yesterday when she announced that she would not be watching the latest instalment of the Nescafé Gold Blend television commercial.

A spokesman for Clarence House said that the Queen Mother was "perfectly healthy" but had made other arrangements for the evening. He denied that the Queen Mother "disapproved" of the couple drinking coffee outside marriage and said that she wished them well.

A distressed Nescafé official commented: "Of course the couple are disappointed. They were hoping for the Queen Mother's blessing on their union. But they understand that she has prior commitments."

Late News

The Queen Mother has relented and has agreed to fit the long 1½ minute ceremony into her schedule.

Postman Pat's CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

"There's a letter for you, Pat," said Mrs Goggins.

"Really?" said Pat. "I wonder if it's a Christmas card."

Pat opened the letter. "Oh dear," he said. "It's a P45."

"Is that bad news, dear?" asked Granny Dryden as Pat began to cry.

"Yes, I've been sacked," sobbed Pat. "What am I going to tell my wife?"

"Tell her you've been rationalised," said Mrs Goggins as she smartened up the Post Office ready for privatisation. "It's the last letter anyone in Greendale will be getting."

So ex-Postman Pat gave back the shiny red van and his smart blue uniform. Then he sat around at home watching Channel 4 racing and *Prime Time* with Maggie Philbin.

Then he went to the pub and spent his redundancy money. There he met Peter Fogg, the farmer.

"Don't moan to me," said Peter. "Under the GATT agreement I've got to set aside most of my farm. I'm less employed than you."

"Never mind, you two," said Granny Dryden, "let's all have a nice cup of vodka."

So ex-Postman Pat staggered back home along the twisty windy roads of Greendale to his home. And there was a message from his wife Sarah on the table.

"Dear Pat, I have left you for Ted Glenn. At least he has a job and he'll be a good father to our black and white cat, Jess."

A SYLVIE KRIN SPECIAL

NEVER THE TWAIN. . . .

BY SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles and Diana have agreed to an amicable separation...

Now read on...

THE large oaken door slammed and the sound seemed to reverberate through the whole of Highgrove House. Charles stood looking through the leaded windows as the soft rain tapped a melancholy roundelay against the ancient glass. Through the December mist loomed the gaunt bare trees, their gnarled boughs like naked arms raised to heaven beseeching mercy on all below.

Charles watched as his wife, as she still was, tripped lightly down the steps and climbed into her Asda 8 litre GLR. Whittam-Smith the faithful chauffeur dutifully placed her Pascal Roger luggage into the boot. The engine purred and suddenly she was gone.

Charles walked slowly across the room, kicking an empty-cassette box she had left. He picked it up and four leather clad men stared mockingly at him. "Ultranoise — Greatest Hits" it read and then underneath in biro "To Squidge from your know who!"

He tossed it aside and gazed at the empty shelves, her laughter seeming to echo in the corridors of his mind.

"I've won, Chazza. I told you I would. You never listened to me and now you're paying for it. You thought I was some silly little blonde whose head was full of nothing but clothes and having fun. How wrong could you be! You were always too busy with your fogey friends to realise that I was more popular than you. It was me they loved! Me! And they'll still love me. You'll see."

Charles fought back a tear. It really was appalling, this time, however often he had used the word before. As his old friend and mentor Sir Laurens van der Post had put it in his classic work *Travels Through Sedaka 1947*, "Breaking up is hard to do."

How true that was! How very true.

Of course she was right. She had won. She had her palace, her servants, as much money as she wanted. It had even been agreed that she could become Queen. Separate crowns, separate thrones, separate carriages in the procession.

He tried to imagine how it would be and sat down heavily, not noticing a framed watercolour he had painted for Diana in the early days of their marriage, "Moonlight over Inverness". Sir Hugh Casson had admired it but Diana had never much cared for it. Perhaps that was why she had left it behind.

His reverie was broken by the presence of Sir Alan Fitztightly dressed formally in a pink sweater and black Levi-Strauss 501 jeans. Sir Alan gave a conspiratorial wink and said: "There is a call for you, sir, on the telephonic device. It is a lady. She would not give her name..."

WITH expert hands Whittam Smith piloted the Asda Cabriolet through the narrow streets of Kensington to the Lady Francesca Wheen Guildhall where Diana was to keep her engagement at the AGM of the National Confederation of Marriage Guidance Counsellors.

She felt a sense of elation, of release, of — dare she say it? — freedom. The gilded prison of Charles and his family was behind her. Now she was her own mistress, as one paper had put it, the most beautiful, most famous and most powerful woman in the world.

Yet it was true. She checked her makeup and hair as she always did prior to arriving at a function. She looked radiant in a Naim Attallah full length kashmir suit and Italian vermicelli pigskin boots. "Eat your heart out, Madonna!" said the red-faced chauffeur, admiring her in the mirror and dropping ash onto his blazer from his cigarette.

She smiled. Yes, everything would continue as before. Except there would be no gloomy Chazzo to cast a blight on her flowering talents and come between her and her adoring public like a wet tartan rug.

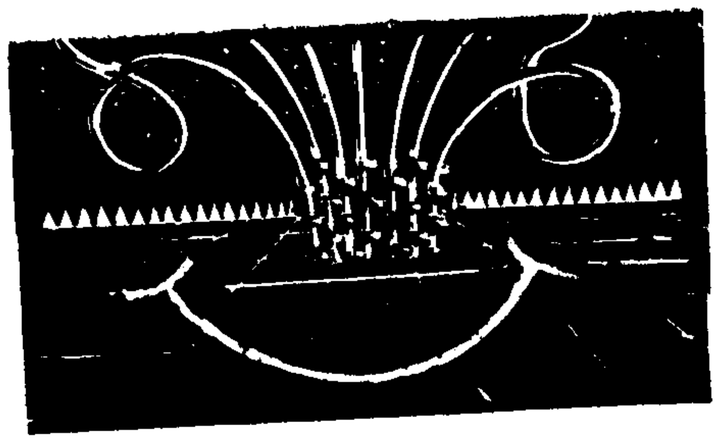
But as the car drew to a halt Diana could see something was wrong. Where were the crowds? The photographers? The flag-waving grannies? The children with bouquets? Where was everyone?

All she could see was a big hoarding hastily erected in the doorway which read: "Tonight's meeting cancelled. The Princess is unwell."

But she was fine. Wasn't she? What could it mean?

(To be continued)

DIARY



LYNN BARBER

According to the *Daily Star*, extra-terrestrials are inhabiting the Queen Mother's body, and caused her to miss the wedding of her granddaughter. Important news, and of immense constitutional and political concern, you might have thought. But have the Press Office at Buck House bothered to comment on it? Have they heck as like! Meanwhile, the Queen Mum is being operated by Martians and there is an almighty hush-up going on. And to think they call this a democracy — what nerve!

Went to interview that Mother Teresa yesterday. She's an intellectual and by golly doesn't she jolly well let you know it. "What do you think of *Eldorado*?" I asked her. She came over all snooty-pants and replied, all hoity-toity, that she'd NEVER SEEN IT. Talk about holier than thou! "I see old Fergie's up to her tricks again?" I said. "Fergie?" she replied, obviously pretending she hadn't read that morning's *Sun*. Pull the other, Mother!

And not just a pseudo-intellectual, but a lazy old so-and-so, too: it was past 11.00am and she answered the door in what looked like her nightclothes — a long gown and a sort of night-hat. Has she never heard of M&S or Miss Selfridge? Oh, NO: far too INTELLECTUAL for that, she'd probably reply. What, I wondered, about Father Teresa — doesn't he get sick to death of her mooching round the house all day in her jim-jams? "I am not married. I have no husband," she replied. Oooh-errr. Put your foot in it there, Lynn, love, I told myself. Throughout the rest of our interview, I looked around for tell-tale signs of a "constant companion": nothing doing.

Talk about one-track-minded! All she went on about was Calcutta, Calcutta, Calcutta. I told her I'd been to Crawley and even to Cardiff but never to Calcutta, so there was no point in her banging on about it. Had she seen the new Madonna book yet? Blank wall time again. I mean honestly! What's her problem? I'd guess she's pretty screwed up. I think that there are probably two Mother Teresas, the Mother Teresa the public sees, and the other, very private Mother Teresa. Interestingly, a friend of mine who met her years ago told me she couldn't remember anything about her. Obviously, old MT wants to have us believe she's totally laid-back and anonymous so that no one will think too hard about her. And that would explain the nightclothes. Frankly, give me John Osborne any day.

My God, you see far too much written about the Royal Family these days! FERGIE, THE QUEEN, DIANA, the lot. Crikey! And why? More often than not, it's the same old answer: poor old hacks not knowing how to fill up their columns, wishing to add a bit of sparkle and controversy by inserting the names of FERGIE or THE QUEEN or DIANA over and over again. Haven't they got anything better than FERGIE or THE QUEEN or DIANA to write about? I mean, honestly!

What, may one ask, is Jason Donovan's big problem? I turned up for an interview with him the other day, placed all my interviewing equipment — tape-recorder, notebook, biro, axe, knife, screwdriver, chainsaw, spare batteries etc — on the table between us, and he turned white as an unused sheet. Goodness, we ARE panicky, I thought. So what's his guilty secret?

He's an intellectual and jolly well makes sure you know it: he certainly didn't bother to cover up the copy of *Time* magazine in the kitchen, I noted. He's obviously dominated by his mother and obsessed with his grandfather, as well as being deeply traumatised by memories of childhood, as there were "smiling" childhood photographs of the lot of them displayed traumatically all over the walls.

"I'm hoping my Christmas record will do well," he suddenly announced, completely out of the blue, after I'd asked him how he thought his Christmas record would do. It doesn't take a genius to work out that he is obviously completely obsessed by how his Christmas record will do. Or else why bother to mention it? I mean honestly!

I sense that there are really three Jason Donovans: the Jason Donovan the public sees, the other, very private Jason Donovan, and a third Jason Donovan who is a bit of both. Will the real Jason Donovan please stand up?

Whoops! Sorry about the economy! That seems to be the general attitude of this Conservative Government. Well, I may not be much good at sums, but I do know a bit about shopping. Frankly, it makes my blood boil when shops just couldn't care less. Yesterday, I went into W.H. Smith and asked the assistant for a new fridge. Was he any help? Was he heck! "Sorry, madam," he replied, getting on his high horse, "But we don't stock fridges." "Well," I replied, "I'll order one, in that case." "Sorry, madam," he replied again (aren't these shop assistants taught to say anything *else*?), "But we don't take orders for electrical hardware."

"So what's this if it's not 'electrical hardware', then?" I said, brandishing a felt-tip pen. Touché. He was left speechless. I mean, honestly!

Went to a party the other day and bumped into Isaiah Berlin, Saul Bellow, V.S. Pritchett and Iris Murdoch, all gathered in a corner looking very brain-boxy and "I've-just-read-another-book-this-week"-ish, thank you very much. "Anyone interesting here?" I asked them, thinking they might at least have spotted someone tasty like Freddie Starr. Not a murmur. "I see Dirty Den might be making a comeback!" I said, in a bid to break the ice. Silence. You know what? Sometimes I wonder if these dry-as-a-stick academics live in the same world as you and me, I really do. Bah!

Is Charles Manson really as ghastly as people crack him up to be? When you've been in the interviewing game as long as I have, you learn to be a pretty shrewd judge of character. I went along to interview poor old Charles Manson last week and found an engagingly eccentric, full of beans and endearingly opinionated. Okay, so my eagle eye noticed that he doesn't bother to shave, that his table manners aren't all they might be, and that he's not the type — like some I could mention — to try to fob you off with the same old lovey-dovey PR platitudes and so forth. But anyone who knows the lyrics to all The Beatles' White Album can't be all bad — and he's an unabashed smoker to boot. If the so-called Conservative Government continues to make such a hash over running this country, I think they could do a lot worse than sending for Charles Manson — he's a walking encyclopaedia of man-management, knows how to get things done, boasts an international reputation and, unlike a few I could name, he's no ditherer. Prime Minister Manson? It's got a good, strong ring to it, you must admit.

Jumping in at the deep end of life

Seeing the other side of Maxwell

UNDISCOVERED ENDS by Bruce Kent
(Harper Collins, £15.95)
HE will have no memory of it, but once, in a down moment, I had the good fortune to meet Bruce Kent when he was parish priest of St. Aloysius, the round ... Euston Station. H... then w...

MAXWELL STORIES by Sam Jaffa
(Robson Books, £8.99)
EVERYONE has a Maxwell story. Some of the best I heard while working in Fleet Street – and some I didn't – are collected in Sam Jaffa's book.
Jaffa is not the first to write a book about 'Cap'n ... to the ma...

The Universe

Literary Review

Books of the Year

FOR SEVERAL years this column has tracked the log-rolling in books of the year choices: the cheery waves over the page to pals, publishers, lovers, former pupils and even *old tutors.*

It's become a Christmas tradition. Ruth Rendell and Anita Brookner bob and curtsey to one another; Peter Levi and P.J. Kavanagh stand each other a round; Malcolm Bradbury sends his best wishes to the alumni of his course in creative writing; Craig Raine licks the arse of Ian McEwan, his old friend and near-neighbour in north Oxford — everybody gets into the festive spirit. It's the book trade's office party.

But this year people have become a little shy, shame-faced even. To be sure, Julie Burchill, Jan Morris and Alice Thomas Ellis chose only books by their friends, but the party-poopers admitted it. In the *Independent on Sunday*, shockingly, contributors were again disallowed from nominating books by colleagues.

There remain, however, one or two valiant outposts of old-style plugging. Hilary Mantel, who this year wrote a prepublication puff for Adam Thorpe's *Ulverton* and then somehow "reviewed" it too, made it her book of the year in the *TLS* ("displays a unique brand of talent, virtuosity, energy and warmth of heart"), the *Spectator* ("an amazing technical feat but also warm, funny and very moving") and the *Daily Telegraph* ("not so much a novel as a theatrical performance: uncanny, accomplished and moving").

Kate Kellaway, in the *Observer*, bravely selected her dear friend James Lasdun's wretched stories; and Craig Raine did the business for McEwan's *Black Dogs* in the *IOS*. A.S. Byatt recommended Christopher Hope's *Serenity House* in the *Sunday Times*, Byatt and Hope being old chums. And Alice Thomas Ellis's plugged Beryl Bainbridge's *The Birthday Boys* in *The Spectator* — Bainbridge's publisher, Colin Haycroft of Duckworth, being ATE's husband.

But generally it was a pitiful performance. All the bitchy reviews of reviews have finally killed the spirit of giving that used to prevail at this time of year. Happily, though, mutual aid has been replaced by something even funnier: sustained self-advertisement.

Books are now chosen primarily to display the chooser's character. You still can't find out which books to buy, but you can discover how all these people like to think of themselves.

Nicholas Shakespeare likes to think of himself as an exotic, so he chooses foreign novels and adds: "I finished this on a glacier 16,000 feet in the Andes". Anita Brookner is sorry for herself and so writes: "Colin Dexter's *The Way Through The Woods* is beguiling enough to make one forget a high temperature, as it did in my case, and other winter ailments". Jocelyn Targett is consumed with ambition and self-importance, so he believes *Black Sun* by Geoffrey Wolff must be the book of the year, even though it wasn't published this year, because "Of the books I've read this year, it is the one I am most jealous of."

Craig Raine is sex-mad and so in the *TLS* said quite simply: "I enjoyed the sex in three books: Garrison Keillor's *Radio Romance*, Nicholson Baker's *Vox* and Susan Wicks's *Singing Underwater*," as though he was the one who had it (no doubt, in the privacy of home, he did). Malcolm Bradbury's recent novel was slaughtered by the reviewers, so he begins: "In the chaotic and often bitter spirit of reviewing this last year, two books that have given me great pleasure seem not to have won the careful attention they deserve." Sadly, neither was actually his own.

That perfection was left to Jeanette Winterson, who famously chose her own effort as book of the year, rightly suspecting perhaps that nobody else would. "My own *Written on the Body* is this year's most profound and profoundly misunderstood book. A fiction which dismantles the scaffolding of the 19th century novel, replacing time, place, situation, character, even gender, with an intense consciousness. An exaltation of love. An exultation in language. Words unclothed." Mind unhinged? No, Winterson has merely grasped that these choices exist purely for self-display and acted decisively, praising her own intelligence overtly, rather than covertly like everybody else. She has set a standard.

The prize for axe-grinding goes to Paul Johnson, recommending in the *ST* Lady Antonia Fraser's *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and claiming it was attacked by "envious" academics. In fact the academics' complaints were at inaccuracy and emotiveness.

The widespread recognition that book of the year choices are for waggling your bum seductively, rather than choosing the books of the year, has led to the phenomenal number of multiple entries this year: William Boyd, Alastair Forbes, John Biffen, Penelope Lively, Julian Barnes, Auberon Waugh, Craig Raine, Tom Paulin, Gabriel Josipovici, Jonathan Keates, D.J. Taylor, J.G. Ballard, Ruth Rendell, A.S. Byatt, Lorna Sage, Jonathan Raban, Terry Eagleton, Paul Johnson and Frederick Raphael — all made two or three appearances in various papers, some choosing the same, some different. Vote early and vote often, eh?

Adding up total nominations is therefore best done on the one, two, oh hell, heck of a lot, system. Much the most mentioned title was the *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin* (with Anthony Powell's commendation — "The selection contains much to ponder" — the most poignant, since what Powell must be pondering is the discovery that although Larkin wrote to him politely enough, in letters to Kingsley Amis he regularly called him "the horse-faced dwarf").

Victoria Glendinning's *Trollope* and Miranda Seymour's *Ottoline Morrell* were the most popular biographies, and *Ulverton* would have been the most-cited novel even without Hilary Mantel's heft. Other books that may well be quite good are Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*, John Gross's *Shylock*, Charles Sprawson's *Haunts of the Black Masseur: the Swimmer as Hero*, Thom Gunn's poems *The Man with Night Sweats*, Richard Ford's *Granta Book of the American Short Story*, and perhaps even Dona Tartt's debut novel, *The Secret History*. Who knows?

One thing is certain, however. Michael Ignatieff, Edmund White, Valentine Cunningham, Cressida Connolly, Chloe Chard, Zara Steiner and Richard Eyre all chose Michael Ondaatje's completely bogus book, *The English Patient*. They have therefore proved once and for all that they have no literary judgement whatsoever and we need never pay any attention to them again. Thanks very much. A lovely Christmas present.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ CHEEKIE chappie Matthew Evans, chairman of Faber & Faber for 10 years and managing director for the last 20 has shrewdly decided to bail out as managing director.

Although more Famous People picked Faber titles as their Books of the Year than books published by any other imprint, the once high and mighty literary house has had a disappointing year, with not even a novel shortlisted for the Booker.

Editorial director Robert McCrum has also had enough, and in future he's going to work only two days a week for the firm. A new managing director is being headhunted, and a new editor, for some reason assumed to be female, is being advertised for.

The real trouble, of course, is that the royalties from *Cats* are finally beginning to dry up, and there is no way under the present laid-back and somewhat louche management that Faber can make a profit from the sale of its upmarket list, even charging what it does for the reproduction of poetry by Auden, Eliot and the others.

Compared with other publishers during this eternity of recession, Faber is grossly overstaffed. It is likely that 1993 will see it under some corporate umbrella. Clever money predicts Skinny Cheetham's Orion group.

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
WHAT I LOVE ABOUT CHRISTMAS IS THAT IT'S A TIME FOR THE FAMILY....
....THE ROYAL FAMILY GOD BLESS 'EM!
AWFUL! TERRIBLE INVASION OF PRIVACY
DIANA HER TRUE STORY INCLUDING ANOTHER SORRY CHAPTER
KING OF KINGS - THE TRUE STORY
SNIPCOCK'S ROYAL POP-UP BOOK

JUSTICE

A May-fly in the ointment

NO ONE paid much attention when Sir John May, former lord justice of appeal, published another report on the case of the Maguire family, wrongly convicted and imprisoned for explosives offences in 1976.

This was a pity, for the second May report (the first was in 1990) is not only a further devastating attack on the scientific "officers" responsible for the Maguires' convictions, but also a sharp rebuke to three senior judges in the existing court of appeal — lords justices McCowan, Stuart-Smith and Mann.

In his first report, Sir John concluded that the forensic tests carried out on the hands and gloves of the Maguire family, and their luckless friend Guiseppe Conlon, "could no longer be taken to have proved that the traces were traces of nitroglycerine (NG)".

How the officers, especially Donald Higgs, principal scientific officer at the Royal Armament Research and Disarmament Establishment, had come to the undoubtedly false conclusion that the Maguire family had handled explosives (see *Eye* 796) was left open. The probability was that the tests were incompetently carried out with solutions which were contaminated with the NG they pretended to find.

Sir John concluded anyway that the "whole scientific basis upon which the Maguires' prosecution was founded had in truth been so vitiated that on this basis alone the court of appeal should be invited to set aside the convictions". The court of appeal (McCowan, Mann, Stuart-Smith) declined this invitation. In a testy judgement they conceded that the convictions had been unsafe and unsatisfactory, but only on the narrow ground that the Maguires' hands and gloves could have been "innocently contaminated" by explosives.

Their lordships helpfully suggested that they might have wiped their hands on a towel used by someone else who had been in contact with explosives. As so often with such speculations from the appeal court, not a shred of evidence was produced to support this contention (no towel for example) and not one of the lords advanced a view as to how Mrs Maguire's gloves (which were allegedly full of NG) could have come into contact with the contaminated towel. Coldly and clinically listing his reasons, Sir John concludes: "In the result I do not find anything in the appeal judgment to lead me to alter the conclusions I expressed in my interim report."

After sticking two fingers up to his three former colleagues, Sir John goes on to consider the fantastic prosecution against the Maguire family (which resulted in them spending long periods in prison — Patrick Maguire, a respectable member of Paddington's Conservative Party, got 10 years; so did his equally respectable wife Annie; their friend Guiseppe Conlon, who was guilty of absolutely nothing, spent four and a half years in prison until the home secretary at last ordered his release on the day he died).

Sir John asks first why the prosecution was brought in the first place. He reveals that a legal assistant in the attorney-general's office, Roger Maitland, had grave doubts about the scientific evidence and again and again expressed these doubts to his superiors. "Retired experts," noted Maitland before the Maguires were even charged, "have strongly challenged the evidence." In all other cases where people had been prosecuted for explosives offences, he observed, the scientific tests had been backed up by other evidence such as confessions.

Maitland's earnest reservations were brushed aside by the two barristers advising the attorney-general: Michael Havers, who later became attorney-general himself; and Michael Hill QC, then treasury counsel. According to Maitland's note of the meeting: "Sir Michael and Mr Hill emphatically assured the attorney-general that the Woolwich method of analysis provides conclusive proof of nitroglycerine. They said it was comparable to fingerprint identification."

This nonsense — that the scientific tests of swabs on hands for traces of explosives are as certain as fingerprinting — was repeated by both Hill and Havers in the Maguire trial. "I believe," concludes Sir John May drily, "that it was an unhelpful analogy."

Sir John clearly believes the Maguires should never have been prosecuted. He agrees with the remark of Guiseppe Conlon's counsel that "the crown case, as presented at trial, was so improbable as to be frankly incredible".

What happened after the convictions? In the last section of his report, May reveals some fascinating documents from the home office's C3 department, which dealt with the mounting volley of complaints from Cardinal Hume downwards about the continuing unjustified incarceration of the Maguire family.

One after the other, the heads of C3 advised their ministers to stall, to prevaricate and above all not to reopen the case. The first names of these officials are not given, but their surnames are Watts, Cook, Verney, Stanton and Caffarey.

A report as late as 19 December 1986 from Caffarey came to the stunning conclusion: "DO NOTHING. The Home Secretary could of course conclude than no action on his part is taken. This in fact is the course which we think justified."

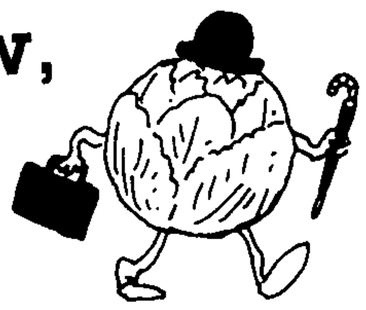
The ministers concerned were only too happy to take this advice. The first was Patrick Mayhew (now Northern Ireland secretary). The most obstinate and reactionary of all, however, was David Mellor, who now poses as a great reformer. In 1987, for instance, Mellor grovelled to his boss, Douglas Hurd: "I reviewed this case thoroughly in 1986 and personally explored the validity of the TLC test with a specialist. My conclusion then was that the forensic evidence which formed the central element in the prosecution case was unshaken..."

The "unshaken" evidence, not unlike Mr Mellor's subsequent career, is now shaken to pieces. Thanks in particular to Mellor and his advisers, the Maguire case was not referred to the court of appeal until after 1990, and was in the end only successful on a technicality. Sir John May's latest report reasserts in very polite language his original view that the entire case was a scandal from beginning to end, that it should never have been brought, that it was wrongly put to the jury and should have been corrected long before it was.

No doubt the home office, which still has to pay out compensation to the Maguires (and to the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four) will try to scale down the amount on the basis of the appeal court prevarications and double-talk. Before doing so, they should read the May reports carefully.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Mad cow, sheep and pig disease



WHILE a pitifully lame compromise was cobbled together in Edinburgh (*Shurely "A diplomatic triumph skilfully negotiated by John Major..."? Ed.*), **the straitjackets have been busy on the *real* work of the community: developing plans to count every single one of the community's sheep, cows, goats and pigs.**

The idea, to counter farm subsidy fraud, would be comical were it not so expensive and so serious. An inspired member of the Euro executive "civil service" wants to eartag every farm animal in the community's 12 countries, while using satellite surveillance to monitor crops.

The European commission proposal, now approved by members of the Euro parliament, will be voted on by agricultural ministers in the next 10 days. If it gets the final go-ahead, it will effectively mean identifying more than 100 million sheep, 84 million head of cattle and 14 million goats, not to mention other four-legged beasts.

Spokesman for the parliament's budgetary control committee, Terry Wynn, MEP for Merseyside East, said it could lead to a bureaucratic nightmare since there are nine million farmers in the community. "It's wide open to fiddling," he told the *Eye*. "Human nature is what it is... it will need an army of inspectors to check everything and no one has said how much this will cost. The commission are already spending 1.5 million ECU (about £1,215,000) in the next two years, just to employ five experts to monitor the project."

With 10 percent of the agricultural budget of 35 billion ECUS (£28.4 billion or 57 per cent of the community budget) lost on fraud, estimated two years ago, the cost of setting up a computerised database, comprehensive land register with annual returns from farmers, a system for identifying and recording every animal and innumerable inspectors could easily exceed the amount lost in fraud — approximately £3 billion a year.

There was heated debate in Strasbourg when rapporteur Michel Debatisse, representing the commission on agriculture, fishery and rural development, reminded MEPs that, with the abolition of frontier controls, there was increased risk of contamination and epidemics which needed more controls. He added that eartagging was already used in several countries for health checks.

One MEP, Jean-Claude Martinez, expressed a commonsense view perhaps shared by many taxpayers when he told Mr Debatisse: "Your state of mind is terrifying. When I read this report I had the impression I was having a nightmare." As for the tax register proposed, he was even more explicit: "It's just a new Soviet system, a little more sophisticated and with more controls. There are no limits to community madness. Perhaps we should also tag ladybirds?"

Sir James Scott Hopkins, MEP for Hereford and Worcester, reasoned that although the UK was beginning to introduce a data bank for all her farm animals, other EC countries would never be able to organize themselves in time for 1993.

Amazingly, the commission proposal was adopted by the Euro parliament, and a directive from the council of ministers recently set out the minimum requirements for identifying and registering animals, including births, deaths and movements. They stipulated that agricultural holdings, as set out in the directive, should include "open-air farms" and that farmers should be "natural persons". Excluded are "natural persons who keep only one pig for their own use". Sadly, there was nothing in the directive about "unnatural" persons who might keep pigs for their own use.

ARSON

Match of the day...

AN UNFORTUNATE accident may have tidied up an annoying problem for developers Urban Waterside, the company responsible for the hi-tech, gleaming-glass skyscrapers at Salford Quays, the old Manchester docks.

Urban Waterside wants to build 300 houses on a scrubby 40-acre patch in Adswood, Stockport. The £40 million potential development site is empty but for one Paul Wilson, who has an acre of scrapyard slap bang in the middle of the proposed estate.

Wilson inherited squatter's rights from a gipsy who lived on the site and died two years ago. Wilson refuses to budge and has just turned down a £15,000 buy-out offer from British Rail, which owns the land. BR now faces a long legal battle to get him out with a compulsory purchase order.

But at the end of November, a funny thing happened: lo and behold, Wilson's caravan suddenly caught fire and burned down, destroying most of his possessions!

According to the fire brigade, the blaze was started deliberately after petrol was poured on to tyres. Whoever lit the match had to get past a snarling dog and climb fencing and a mountain of slippery tyres in the pitch black. No petrol can was ever found and the fire was limited to Wilson's home.

COAL v GAS

Energy policy? It's the pits

PROFESSOR Stephen Littlechild, director-general of electricity regulation, reentered the energy debate in spectacular style last week doing everything he could to undermine the efforts of the government to staunch its self-inflicted wounds.

In the coal v. gas saga, Littlechild stuck to his *monetarist principles* and said gas was cheaper — a verdict that in theory sanctions the shutting down of the coal industry with the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.

Margaret Thatcher, who appointed him, would have been proud; but Michael Heseltine will be less enthusiastic if he or his government still hopes to survive the political storm over pit closures and energy "policy".

Littlechild arrived at his conclusion by concentrating on the cost of gas today — "prices actually offered," he emphasised, "not generation costs and the prices that might have been offered". He thus ignored the commonsense view that, with perhaps 25 years' supply or less of gas available, the price is bound to rocket as stocks fall and demand rises. Britain will be in no position to haggle because it will have no alternative.

Littlechild also ignored the fact that the cheap new combined cycle gas turbines have a design-life of only 15 years, compared with at least 25 years for coal-fired plant. It is then, when supply is diminishing and a new power station has to be built, that the owners of the gas stations will simply walk away and leave someone else to worry about providing electricity.

By the same shortsighted logic Littlechild also concluded that even nuclear power was cheaper than coal — forgetting that it was the City who refused point black to buy nuclear, which had to be removed from the privatisation package. Here, at least, he appears to be committing the cardinal Thatcherite sin of bucking the market.

Littlechild's report sits comfortably in the chaos that has descended on energy under the control of Heseltine, president of all he surveys. It is eight weeks since he approved the sacking of 30,000 miners, wanting most of them out within the week. The rush was so that no miner need be paid for one day longer than necessary. After the uproar, Heseltine backed down and appointed a departmental review team to find a quick way out. Now he has adopted a more relaxed approach, writing to the Labour chairman of the select committee on trade and industry, Richard Caborn, in unusually humble tones: "I thought your committee might find it helpful to have an update on the conduct of the review..."

Heseltine said his department had written to 200 organisations asking for their views and received back 277 submissions. He attached a "note" by his review team on possible options, including "the position of Magnox (nuclear) power stations and the development of Sizewell B". Also listed are studies of orimulsion (the dirty, bitumen-based fuel), renewables, electricity imports from France and Scotland, operation of the market, environmental commitments, encouraging FGD (clean coal) and energy efficiency.

This sort of massive survey would normally occupy a royal commission or government department for several years. Yet it has been acquired by Hezza as a mere sideshow from what is supposed to be his main job fostering trade and industry.

That notwithstanding, his decision to abolish the energy department on the grounds that energy would need no attention from the government because it was now almost entirely privatised, was not inconsiderably dim. Energy now takes more ministerial time than ever before.

One result of the chaos is that the future of the nuclear industry is again under consideration as a means of keeping coal alive — the opposite of what Margaret Thatcher intended when she launched her nuclear building programme.

Those giving evidence to Caborn's select committee and to Heseltine's review are busy knifing each other in the front and back. The generating companies suggest the regional electricity companies (RECs) should be made to take the consequences of the mess; the RECs are in favour of putting the burden on the generators and also of closing nuclear plants. Coal says shut down nuclear; nuclear says that further liberalisation of the market should be postponed and that the RECs who supply the "franchise" customers (that is, the ordinary domestic market) should be forced to buy 70 percent of their electricity from coal-fired power stations — and 22 percent from nuclear.

A significant remark by John Collier, chairman of Nuclear Electric, deserves close attention. He said that of the nuclear levy being received by the company — around £1.3 billion a year and due to reach a total of £9 billion by 1998 — about £5 billion "goes to British Nuclear Fuels in relation to liabilities we inherited". He did not spell out what the liabilities were, but BNFL confirms to the *Eye* that, as suspected, he was referring to fuel reprocessing at Sellafield.

There is a strong feeling in Nuclear Electric (see last *Eye*) that Nuclear Electric should copy Scottish Nuclear and pull out of reprocessing. This would save money and give it better life expectancy, but it would be the final death-blow to the hopes of BNFL.

That is why its chairman John Guinness is rushing around parliament and the civil service trying to win friends. He knows the area well, as a former permanent secretary at energy. He took early retirement last year and, with his contacts in the energy industry, could have picked up a lot of undemanding directorships. Instead he *chose* to go to the hot seat at BNFL. It was a rare indication of his fanatical attachment to nuclear power.

He is now tirelessly proclaiming the need to go ahead with Thorp, the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield. He told the *Financial Times* last month that the ruling by the pollution inspectorate that he must not load the plant was costing £1 million a week. A month passed and he doubled the number he first thought of: BNFL was losing £2 million a week.

That is still a long way short of the £5 billion Nuclear Electric will have to pay him for de-commissioning, if THORP ever does go ahead.

POLICE 4

Copper-bottomed cock-up

YET MORE twists have appeared in the Ged Corley case, the never-ending Greater Manchester police corruption saga.

Four Manchester coppers suspended for two-and-a-half years on full pay without charge have been reinstated now that West Yorkshire police have finished their investigation into the botched conviction of the former Greater Manchester constable (*Eyes passim*).

Corley was jailed for 17 years in 1989 for allegedly supplying weapons to criminals. But he was released relatively swiftly (cf the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six) when it was shown that he had been jailed on the word of unreliable supergrasses. Police authorities were unable to find anything against the four suspended coppers who, it seems, were caught up in Knacker's desperation to apportion blame for the Corley cock-up.

One of the four, a WPC Jones, made the mistake of volunteering information on the Corley case and was "invited" to GMP's Sedgley Park training school to divulge what she knew. Although Jones was told she would be free to go at any time, was not under arrest and was not obliged to answer particular questions, she was arrested as soon as she tried to leave, driven 30 miles against her will to Huddersfield and interrogated, Stasi-style, by West Yorkshire's finest. Indeed, so over-the-top was Knacker's conduct he himself may end up in the dock for over-zealous questioning.

Another of the four, Sgt Paul Duxbury, will be known to *Eye* readers through his involvement with notorious supergrass Ian Massey and the case of the Cardiff Three, who finally had their wrongful convictions for murdering Lynette White quashed last week.

Massey, who had been one of the first witnesses to testify against Corley, told Duxbury that one of the Cardiff Three, Tony Paris, had confessed to him while they chatted in Cardiff nick that he had murdered the woman. This was the only corroborative evidence holding Paris's conviction together, and last week the appeal court made it plain what it thought of police "evidence" in the case when it released Paris and his two colleagues. (Duxbury himself later went to the court of appeal to win Massey a reduced sentence for one of his robberies.)

Meanwhile the suspension of the four GMP coppers will act as a warning to other police officers considering volunteering information out of a sense of duty to the smooth course of justice. Even worse for the taxpayer, the four were paid roughly quarter of a million pounds for doing no police work over 30 months, while West Yorks' investigation itself cost more than £1 million.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Un-hip flasks

THE recent IRA bomb near Willesden Junction freight depot in north-west London was only small, but it sent out big shock waves — much to the chagrin of the nuclear industry.

The mini-device destroyed 18 inches of track — the very track used twice a week by trains carrying deadly night-time consignments of nuclear waste. The attack reopens the debate on the safety of such cargoes in built-up areas.

Flasks of nuclear waste fuel pass through the marshalling yard at Brent Sidings on their way from Dover to Sellafield for reprocessing. The flasks — from Germany, Holland, Italy and Switzerland (and our own Dungeness, Bradwell and Sizewell power stations) — each contain as much waste as a small nuclear reactor.

Despite the PR gush from British Rail, British Nuclear Fuels, flask-makers Nuclear Electric and the radiation watchdog, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), that the flasks are indestructible, Greenpeace will now call for leukaemia studies around shunting yards.

And not without reason. Even without the threat posed by terrorists or derailments, there is already enough unstoppable leakage of gamma and beta radiation to justify a study of irradiated yards and rail routes (this is in addition to doses of neutron particles and "creep" — airborne flask material dislodged from the flasks' surfaces, caused by their immersion in cooling ponds during loading of the waste.)

If Sellafield II, aka THORP (the thermal oxide reprocessing plant), Cumbria's £1.8 billion second reprocessing plant, does go "live" (*See accompanying article*), nuclear rail traffic through London will rocket. The world's two favourite official dustbins (Sellafields I and II) hope to take up to 600 tonnes of spent fuel between them per year, doubling the current total.

Furthermore, Professor John Large of Brunel University, former Sellafield scientist and reactor designer, says Sellafield II has been designed to receive and deal with waste fuel *more than ten times* more radioactive than that of its sister plant, thus boosting the potential danger to those who live in Willesden, Crewe, Llandudno Junction, Carlisle or anywhere in between, for that matter.

Sellafield II also hopes to return plutonium extracted from the waste to its original home, with up to half of it set to trundle back along the Willesden Junction-Dover ferry route.

It is also worth recalling the following:

- In secret tests an "indestructible" flask failed after being dropped 12 metres. Trains cross viaducts up to 50 metres high. Some experts believe a flask could fail if it hit a stonefacing, such as a bridge, at 45mph. The trains travel at 30 to 60 mph.
- If the flasks really are beyond destruction, as claimed, why in 1983 did an NRPB report compute the likely deaths if a leak occurred at Willesden? (It predicted 1,300 deaths and a similar number of diseases.)
- The flasks should spend only two hours in a shunting yard. Greenpeace claims they sometimes loiter for up to two days at a time.

In the City

IT MAY be the last happy Christmas for some time for certain of the *dramatis personae* in the Maxwell saga.

An extensive report on aspects of the investigation by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and City Police, not yet the subject of charges, is currently being studied by counsel with a view to deciding whether further charges should be brought, and if so against which new targets in addition to the already charged brothers Maxwell and acolytes Larry Trachtenberg and Richard Bunn.

The charges initiated in June only cover some of the areas probed by the SFO: the £55 million and $35 million loans from Swiss Bank Corporation and Swiss Volksbank, and the pillaging of the pension funds. The SFO has also been examining the near £100 million syphoned out of Mirror Group Newspapers; the manipulation of the Maxwell Communication Corp and MGN share prices; and other aspects of MCC's affairs.

It is expected that other charges will be brought covering these areas, while it is also possible that further charges may be added concerning existing matters.

As to who will be joining the Maxwells in the dock, a lot depends on who in the inner circle is prepared to cooperate. Interest will clearly focus on such key insiders as Michael Stoney, chief finance man for the Maxwell private companies; Alan Stephens, secretary for a myriad Maxwell companies; and New York lawyer Sheldon Aboff, a longtime trusted Maxwell associate.

Aboff is currently being pursued by the Maxwell administrators for £6.6 million he was provided with by the private companies to buy MCC and MGN shares. Certain small sums have already been handed over to the administrators here, Arthur Andersen. Aboff claims to have been wiped out as a result of purchasing the worthless MCC shares which Kevin Maxwell facilitated. The deals were largely done through Maxwell's brother-in-law, Darryl Warnford-Davies. Aboff has been engaged in negotiations to cut a deal. It is believed Aboff is endeavouring to trade help in return for escaping bankruptcy or worse.

No decision is likely to be taken on the question of further charges and defendants until well into 1993; but it is now looking increasingly likely that Maxwell will follow in the ill-fated Guinness track of multiple trials. If so, the SFO — and the taxpayer — must hope it achieves a much better result.

AS HE AWAITS the expected SFO decision to bring charges, former Brent Walker chief George Walker regularly shuttles between London and Moscow as a cigarette salesman.

Not-so-Gorgeous George tells friends he is doubling his money by trading cigarettes for Russian goods like coal, timber and petrol, which he barters around the world. Just who finances these jaunts and receives the profits may well be of interest to the angry bankers who have so far failed to force "The Prisoner" into bankruptcy, despite being owed more than £40 million.

The SFO has been studying the Scotland Yard fraud squad report on Walker for some months. A decision is believed to be imminent. The expectation is that by early next year Walker and maybe two of his associates will have been charged in connection with two payments totalling £12.5 million.

Considerable speculation surrounds the roles played in these payments by former Brent Walker finance director Wilfred Aquilina and Goldcrest Films director John Quested.

A NEW and secret investigation into certain aspects of the Polly Peck affair has been launched by Scotland Yard, as distinct from the ongoing fraud squad investigations for the SFO. The investigation is into serious allegations that have been made which contain suggestions of possible corruption. The investigation is being handled outside the SFO in order to minimise impact on the Polly Peck trial, due next year but already looking to be subject to lengthy delay.

THE investigation into the collapse of Landhurst Leasing has revealed that a number of its more celebrated clients were less than prompt in making payments.

Landhurst creditors will no doubt have been encouraged to learn that former Amber Day chief executive Philip Green had received a £1.1 million pay-off. It seems Green was behind with certain of his payments — but suggestions of more than a year are clearly ridiculous. So too are suggestions that commissions may have been paid on certain of the Amber Day/Landhurst leasing deals. Barclays, it seems, was also more than a little relieved to hear of the golden goodbye — the bank has a loan outstanding against Green's Amber Day shares, which are firmly pinned below 30p.

Green's pal Tony Berry is also said to owe up to £800,000 on cars and antique furniture leased by his companies. And Berry's pal Terry Venables is said to be another slow payer on his loan which, with interest, could now approach £1.5 million.

None of these matters will require the attention of the City fraud squad, which is now picking through the Landhurst wreckage identifying the black holes left by the numerous bad, doubtful and dubious debts.

THE MAJOR mystery about Dieter Bock, the £50 million benefactor of Lonrho's Tiny Rowland (other than why he is paying over the odds for shares in a company he will not control for three years, if ever) is exactly on what basis his claim to billionairedom is made.

A recent survey by *Forbes* magazine of the 400 richest Germans saw Bock creep in at number 380, with a fortune estimated at a mere DM200 million (£80 million). The list included some 80 real billionaires.

At the time, two months ago, that Bock bought a half share in the troubled Kempinski hotel group, his master company Advanta Management was described by the Frankfurt financial press as "little known". Billionaires are rarely so unheralded.

And as at December 1991 Advanta itself was valued at no more than £35 million (after a revaluation earlier that year) in the accounts of its 20 percent shareholder Advanta plc, of which Bock is sole shareholder.

All of which suggests that not only is Bock only a billionaire legend in his own and Lonrho's lunchtime, but that it is hard to believe the £135 million he is paying for his Lonrho shares (from Rowland and on the rights issue) does not involve more than a little help from his banking friends.

'Slicker'

Lookalike

Fayed

Bock

Sir,

I hope nobody has noticed the remarkable resemblance between those two mysterious billionaires, Mohammed Fayed and Dieter Bock? They both insisted on pressing large cheques into my hand for shares I greatly treasured even though it is not quite clear how they afforded it. I do hope they are not related (either to each other or the Sultan of Brunei). I would hate to be forced to expose the generous Herr Bock as an imposter, just like I did my other former fast friends, the phoney Pharaoh and that Aussie fake Alan Bond.

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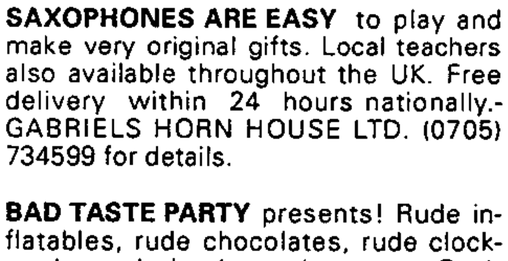

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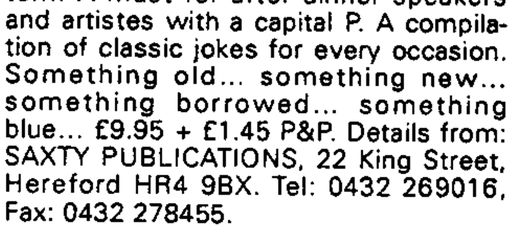

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UNATTACHED HANDSOME man 35 enjoys travel, books and theatre, seeks attractive lady for lasting relationship. London, Swindon. Box 5508.

MALE GRADUATE, professional (29), full MOT though rust setting in, seeks scrap merchant or caring female restorer. London. Box 5008.

NORTHERN MALE, 26, seeks female 16-65 for fun, friendship and frolics. Box 5108.

"A PHANTOM of delight." One gregarious tall classy lady 48 wishes to meet a very special successful man, 48-68 for love, laughter, and sharing ever after. All letters answered and sealed with a kiss. Box 5208.

ATTRACTIVE INTELLIGENT older man seeks lady n/s for whatever. Box 5308.

S.O.S. MAN of my dreams, where are you? You are attractive, intelligent, romantic (30-40), but extremely elusive! Please rescue this damsel in distress! Box 6308.

NORFOLK: DIVERTING man needed by enthusiastic fun professional lady, 45 n/s. Box 6408.

SEXY, SLIM and gentle single professional man, London based, seeks attractive up-market married lady for discreet pleasures. Meet me for afternoon tea in Knightsbridge? Box 6508.

DOES A SMART woman turn you on? Amazing American woman, 36, Harvard educated with broad intellect, sexy, sophisticated, seeks kind, successful, sensual, outgoing, warm, internationally minded, educated, rich (or at least comfortable) 40s-50s male, who loves to read, enjoys fine food and drink and retains an unquenchable curiosity for life — for a passionate, committed, fulfilling (and wicked!) long term relationship. Great sense of humour essential. Note/photo please. Box 6708.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL male 32 married and bored seeks youngish slim woman for discreet affair. Devon/S. West. Box 6808.

TALL BUSINESSMAN 36 busy lifestyle but in need of that special lady 25-35 to seduce slowly. Photo appreciated. SW London/Surrey. Box 6908.

HARROGATE M.B.A. gentleman trapped in sexless marriage seeks something better from local tall slim lady. Discretion assured (38-50). Box 7008.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 26, London based, seeks slim attractive woman for friendship and more? Box 8608.

SOMEBODY HELP! Red Beetle, bored with professional owner (30), who thinks he's witty, cultured, sporty, good conversationalist. All lies! Attractive, fun loving, intelligent female (25-35) needed: Sort him out! Good letter and photo please. London. Box 8708.

BLACK AND WHITE unite! Professional solvent white male 37 seeks Asian or Black woman for discreet cultural exchange. Box 8808.

MARRIED MAN seeks sexy clean lady mutual discreet fun. No ties. Box 8908.

AN ARAB in Yorkshire, 33, seeks woman for fun and friendship. Box 9008.

SOPHISTICATED SOLICITOR music lover, widely travelled attractive affectionate single, 45, young mind and body, seeks very attractive educated woman, 25-35ish. London. Photo please. Box 9108.

MALE PILOT, 32, with own aeroplane seeks interesting younger lady for mile high club. Fun and discretion assured. South England/anywhere. Photo and phone please. Box 9208.

MISERABLE, SARCASTIC and boring. W. Sussex male 40, tall, bespectacled, seeks female to share long dull winter evenings and awkward silences. Box 9308.

AMUSING ATTRACTIVE M.D. 6' sporty at 40, marriage on rocks, seeks intelligent humourful slim princess. Newcastle, N.East. Box 9408.

ATTRACTIVE ARTICULATE woman (29), occasional ballbreaker, usually pragmatic, mostly insecure; seeks rakish wit for highlife, lowlife and building sandcastles. No task for the emotionally challenged. Lincs/Cambs. Box 9508.

COUNTRY PHYSICIAN (37) would be Bodkin Adams seeks rich adventuress to tend herb garden and partner at croquet. Box 9608.

NEITHER HANDSOME nor butch, but totally depraved ex-pat, 43, unattached, seeks stimulating correspondence with intelligent but completely disgusting woman. Eventual objective: vile debauchery. UK or Orient. Box 9708.

TALL SLIM HANDSOME professional man, fit forties, seeks beautiful discreet younger mistress. Scotland/London. Box 6804.

BREATHTAKINGLY HANDSOME male genius, own jet, requires gorgeous sweetie into hyperbole. London/Manchester/anywhere. Box 7108.

TWENTYSOMETHING ethnic female seeks 25-35 attractive intelligent male. London. Box 7208.

WIDOWER 53 retired healthy second boyhood seeks kindly woman for those feminine touches that bring out the best in a man. Box 7308.

BONAFIDE BORED bloke, mid 40s, 6'+, wants wonderful woman for unfettered unfaithful fun and flirty liaison. Chiltern Line/Marylebone. Box 7408.

TWO COUNTRY gentlemen, 41, 43, divorced, seek the company of two intelligent independent young ladies 25-40 for fun, frolics, friendship. Photos appreciated. East Midlands. Box 7508.

WEALTHY RUSSIAN gentleman 36 180cm seeks woman 36 max, educated non-smoking/drinker, one child acceptable, huge sense of humour essential. Box 80, Moscow, Russia 119285.

LADY BEAR, 40, seeks attentive male bear to share honey, Sugar Puffs, passionate bear hugs, tender togetherness, friendly foreverness. Relocation bearable. Box 8308.

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT professional woman, 30+, soh, interests restaurants, arts, travel, seeks similar man, Cardiff/Bristol. Photo appreciated. Box 7608.

SUCCESSFUL WRITER, attractive, 46, slim, 5'11", unattached, longs to meet intelligent, beautiful, slim lady 30-40 preferably based in SE to enjoy warm unpressured evenings, dinner, good conversation. Photograph please. Box 7708.

FAIRY TALE offered to female 24-30, also loves movies has style and likes to laugh. London area. Photo please. Box 7808.

MALE GRADUATE, 29, reasonable looks, desires equally educated, dark haired female aged 22-35 for cinema, cooking, music, sex, laughter and vodka drinking (any order). 60 mile radius from Glos. Photo appreciated. Box 7908.

LONDON FIREMAN 36 humorous attractive solvent presentable but reserved seeks sparkling and attractive lady 30ish. Perhaps we can rescue each other. Status unimportant, frank letter, photo assures reply. Box 8008.

SLENDER ATTRACTIVE blonde 38 seeks tall cultured gentleman to develop intimate rattle into harmony. Box 8108.

CHARMING, UNIQUE, educated bachelor, 51, desires loving liaison with teasing, pleasing, educated slim lady 25+. Lincolnshire. Box 8208.

CHESHIRE BASED male graduate, 34, single, with a penchant for the good things in life, seeks like minded vivacious lady to share them. Box 8408.

BLACK MALE doctor, 37, seeks woman for passion and friendship. Box 8508.

SENSUAL, LONG-LEGGED financier seeks interesting male company. Box 2209.

GREETINGS: GIRLS, enjoy extensive fun and travel with empyreal northern based blokes. Box 2309.

HEALTHY WEALTHY witty wise adventurer seeks adventuress for uninhibited uncomplicated relationship. I am 40, enjoy life to the full and seek a partner to enjoy some of life's treats. Box 2409.

SURREY MAN, 32, single, conservative, traditionalist, likes classical music, wining/dining, heritage, countryside. Seeks Christian career woman for friendship view marriage. Box 2509.

HELP RESTORE my faith in the opposite sex please. Sensitive soulmate sought by quiet, affectionate, increasingly cynical chap, 24. London/South. Box 2609.

JUST SURFACING. Attractive, tall graduate entrepreneur male 34, materially very successful, slightly bohemian/musical, unpretentious, sincere, seeks feminine, slim, bright female under 30 (who wouldn't normally consider answering advertisements) for friendship and hopefully more. Midlands/anywhere. Photograph/telephone appreciated. Box 2709.

MALE 24 SEEKS female animal kingdom, chordates preferred. Box 2809.

UPLIFT NEEDED after captive Christmas at home. Tall slim amiable usually monogamous graduate professional 52 seeks occasional respite from voracious family and business with like-minded, easy-going forty-plus female. Worcs. Box 2909.

MATISSE IN PARIS? Adventurous London art man (53, bearded) invites interesting unbearded lady (25-45) to potentially wonderful, enduring friendship. Sometimes he's adorable, amusing, appreciative, and sometimes so are you. (No photo, no reply, so don't be silly.) Box 3009.

INTELLIGENT PROFESSIONAL man (44) seeks lighthearted bossy female, London/Sussex. Box 3109.

LITERATUS, 43, seeks voluptuary. Afternoon tutorials. Box 3209.

LONDON MAN, professional, single, presentable, 50 seeks humorous sensual lady for civilised relationship. Photo appreciated. Box 3309.

TRAVELLING REGULARLY to the West Midlands, I want to meet an attractive, clever, slim, well-spoken woman 35 to 50 for dining out and possible discreet medium-term relationship. I am 50, 6', tall, non-smoking, well-off, satisfactory looks, wide-ranging interests, private financier, university graduate and more. Photo for openers, please. Box 3409.

A YANK DOWN and out in London. Likes poetry, sex, champagne. Seeks comely prosperous married woman burdened with an epic ennui. Box 3509.

ATTRACTIVE BLONDE female from Baltic States 24 seeks mature reliable male 25-40 for possible marriage. Box 3609.

POET 48 slim ladies large sized upward bed. Box 3709.

WATCH OUT GIRLS it's about this long and highly dangerous! Full details? Write to Box 3809.

BIKE SEEKS FISH. Box 3909.

MALE AUTO eroticist seeks like minded female to discuss meaning of pop-up headlights. Midlands and E. Anglia area. Currently double garaged so discretion assured. Photo please. Box 4009.

VERY ATTRACTIVE single female 27 seeks witty sincere male for laughs and friendship. London. Box 4109.

BORED ME TO intelligent good looking man needs discreet affair anyone? Anywhere? Photo = swift reply. Box 4209.

THAMES VALLEY woman late 30s, attractive, over-educated, seeks intelligent amusing male company. Box 4309.

PLYMOUTH WOMAN 30 seeks unattached intelligent attractive local professional man 30s. Box 4409.

NURSE, AGED 30, brunette, asks "Is there a doctor in the house?" I'm in need of love on prescription. Photo appreciated. Scotland. Box 4509.

LADY EXECUTIVE (London) 44, attractive(ish), great figure, dynamic personality, realistically seeks balding, middle aged man with slight paunch, preferably intelligent and witty. Box 4609.

FURNITURE DESIGNER/ maker, based NW, fit 43, seeks stunning heiress with bandsaw. Alternatively, attractive, enterprising woman not averse to music, paintings, sailing. Box 4709.

GOOD LOOKING affectionate and romantic man 32 seeks very special woman probably older definitely independent intelligent and exciting. Box 4809.

TALL DARK SLIM attractive businessman (just) 50, enjoys travel, good food, theatre, seeks sensual sophisticated attractive slim lady thirty something to wine dine and pamper and to bring me alive again. Photo please. Plymouth. Box 4909.

OXBRIDGE EDUCATED Italian 25, seeks hedonistic female for uncomplicated uninhibited sensual pleasures. Age/looks irrelevant. Box 5009.

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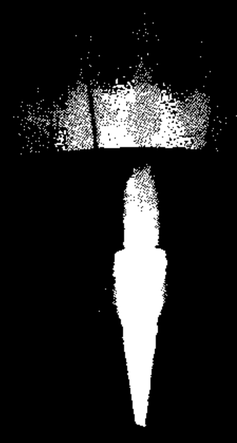

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